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Contents

The Week 57

Editorials

Thunder on the Right 59
Russia and America Strike Hands 61

General Articles

Milo Reno and His Farmers ..... Bruce Bliven 63
The Joyride in Associated Gas .. Charles B. Kefauver 66
Mr. Roosevelt on Stilts ..... Jonathan Mitchell 69
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 71
Other People's Money ..... John T. Flynn 72
Angels and Ministers of Grace ..... Stark Young 73

Correspondence 75

Books in Review

Homesteads, Inc. ..... Malcolm Cowley 77
Comedy of Treason ..... Henry Steele Commager 78
Eight Novels ..... Louis Kronenberger 79
The Instinct to Conform ..... Hutchins Hapgood 80
Accounts Payable ..... Horace Taylor 80
Psychology: The Social Bias ..... Sidney Hook 81
Books in Brief 82

The Week

TUCKED away in the back pages of the newspapers recently was an announcement which may signify a great deal. The N.R.A., through Professor Paul H. Douglas of its Consumers' Advisory Board, is about to undertake the organization of Consumers' County Councils throughout the United States. It is aimed to make these councils truly representative of consumers' interests. They will act as agencies for complaints against undue price increases. They will receive and disseminate information from the Consumers' Board in Washington concerning the effects of the N.R.A. upon consumers. They will "act as an agency through which consumers may become articulate on questions of national economic recovery," and "aid in development of a more economical and efficient distribution of goods to consumers." For a long time the Consumers' Advisory Board has been blanketed. It has not been supported by an organized pressure-group like those back of the labor or industrial advisory boards. Its advice has made little impression on the code authorities, and its statements have been given little publicity. This is evidently an attempt to furnish it with a constituency and a sounding board. If the Consumers' County Councils do become genuine consumers' representatives, business is not so likely to have everything its own way in the forming and administering of the codes. Here is a sign that the administration is buttressing itself to the leftward.

THE defeat of the Social Democrats and the tremendous growth of the monarchist and conservative parties give last Sunday's elections in Spain an extraordinary significance. As we write these lines the final outcome of the election—whether the political upheaval was decisive enough to lead at once to the establishment of a counter-revolutionary government—has not been established; final returns will probably give a slight advantage to the republican parties. Indications are that a sort of interim government of Republicans and Constitutional Conservatives will take the place of the present republican Coalition government. There is a general tendency to attribute the tripling of the anti-republican vote to the fact that the women of Spain for the first time exercised in this election their constitutional suffrage rights. The enormous influence of the Catholic Church and its reactionary clergy over the women of Spain undoubtedly strongly affected the election results. But here as in other countries, the strength of the religious appeal will have been neutralized to some extent by the political influence of the sons, fathers and husbands over their mothers, daughters and wives in the family circle. One will not go wrong in holding the Social Democracy of Spain, and its participation in a coalition government side by side with the bourgeois Republicans against the development of the Spanish revolution, equally responsible for the victory of the forces of reaction. In this unholy coalition none of the promises made by the revolution was kept. Nothing was done in the direction of industrial socialization, every move toward serious land reform was blocked and the industrial and farm proletariat was held in stern subjection lest it become a factor in the state. In Spain, as in Germany and Austria, "democracy" became the god at whose altars the revolution was offered in sacrifice, to be buried under a military dictatorship or to be annihilated by a fascist totalitarian government in the near future.

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DECISION has been reserved on a petition, filed by nineteen members of the Progressive Miners of America, for a restraining order against seven Illinois coal companies. These companies, it is charged, are discriminating against 13,000 members of the Progressive Miners. Judge Louis Fitz-Henry of the United States District Court, sitting in Peoria, November 13, solemnly avowed: "On the face, this is not a labor dispute, but in essence, it is the very quintessence of a labor dispute." He also implied that the petition should be considered under the Norris anti-injunction law, which forbids the granting of restraining orders except in very rare cases, rather than under the N.I.R.A., whose terms the petition declares have been violated. This implied decision supports the contention of former state Senator Thurlow G. Essington of Chicago, representing the coal companies, that the controversy is purely one between Progressives and United Mine Workers. It is well known that the latter organization at present supplies the complete working personnel of mines operated by companies named in the bill. Quoting Donald Richberg, N.R.A. legal counsel, Essington further argued that operation of mines employing both United Mine Workers and Progressives would be impractical—in other words he defended a one-union policy. Judge FitzHenry, shifting the grounds for a possible decision from the N.I.R.A. to the Norris anti-injunction law, averred: "The court cannot grant a restraining order, if this is a labor dispute, except in the letter of the law." Commenting on the impasse which the confusions of Richberg and Essington have created, he excused the anticipated result of his deliberations by this announcement: "If I could pacify the United Mine Workers and Progressive Miners by entering some kind of order here, I would do it regardless of law." He indicated further that the case is too important to be settled without reference to the Supreme Court of the United States. Meanwhile the Progressive Miners are waiting.

AS PREDICTED by Jonathan Mitchell in his article on the new pure food and drugs bill, propagandists for the business interests opposed to this measure are busy. It is not to be expected, of course, that they will come out boldly in favor of selling and advertising poisonous articles. They will appear in sheep's clothing. A Dr. C. Houston Goudiss has just spoken before the New York State Federation of Women's Clubs, assuming to wear the mantle of the late Dr. Harvey Wiley, father of the original measure. He was exultant, he said, when he first heard of the plan to revise the law, but later he "recognized it as only another overzealous measure like our unhappy Eighteenth Amendment and Volstead Act." Why, it even demands that the label of a drug tell exactly what is in it! This is confiscation of trade secrets! The bill would endanger the jobs of nearly 2 million workers—etc., etc. We hope that the New York clubwomen are not averse to knowing, as consumers, exactly what they buy. We hope they are not so innocent as to fall for the plea that it would be dangerous for them to know, because if they did, they might not want to buy or to pay so much as they do. There are sincere opponents of the so-called "Tugwell bill" who want it to be even more strict in regulation than it is. But the mark of the wolf can always be detected in any opposition unless the speaker or writer can clearly demonstrate how the *consumer* would suffer from its passage.

MANY people believe that the unemployment problem is simply the problem of what to do with the unemployed. There have been all sorts of fantastic proposals—bright thinkers have modestly suggested that 30 million people, the members of families without a source of income, should either be shipped off to Siberia or else quietly chloroformed; then the rest of us would be prosperous. Others, like Mr. Ralph Borsodi, have suggested more plausibly that the unemployed could be settled on farms and set to work producing their own food, clothing and shelter. But the defect of all such schemes to solve unemployment by removing the unemployed is that the problem is not merely one of people, but also of a ratio between production and consumption. At present the unemployed serve an economic function—they do not produce, but they consume; they do not consume nearly enough to make the country prosperous, yet somehow, through government help or charity, they do get food and clothing and shelter; they do help to support industry and to keep real-estate values from collapsing. If they were removed not only from production but also from consumption, the rest of the country would not automatically become prosperous. On the contrary, the place of the 30 millions would be taken by perhaps 15 million others. The ratio between production and consumption would remain almost the same—and the unemployment problem would be as bad as ever.

GOVERNOR Miller of Alabama has taken on himself a terrible responsibility in regard to the third trial of the Scottsboro defendants, which opened Monday in the town of Decatur, in Morgan County. The Governor has refused to send troops of the National Guard to protect the defendants and their counsel from possible mob violence, as was done at the second trial, also held in Decatur. Governor Miller says he will not call out the guardsmen unless the county authorities ask him to do so, or unless he is independently convinced of a sudden change in the public feeling in Morgan County. But obviously, county officials will give themselves every benefit of the doubt before admitting that their friends and neighbors are in a lynching mood. And how is the Governor, many miles away, to know of a sudden shift in public opinion? Is there any reason to suppose that the lives of the defendants and their attorneys are actually in dan-

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ger? Some weeks ago, a number of men employed by friends of the defense traveled through Morgan County, representing themselves to be salesmen of soap or brushes. They called at hundreds of homes and in the course of their "sales talk" they brought the subject around to the Scottsboro case. The result is a mass of several hundred affidavits which the defense has presented to Presiding Judge W. W. Callahan, showing that this number of persons expressed themselves in favor of lynching the Scottsboro defendants. Many of those interviewed added that they thought it would be a good idea to do away with "the Jew lawyers from New York" who are acting for the defense.

IT IS possible, of course, to argue that these persons were just indulging in loose talk, which they would never translate into action. The prosecution, evidently having got wind of these affidavits in advance, has introduced a similar large mass of sworn statements by Morgan County residents testifying that they believe in a fair trial and the orderly processes of law. But everyone knows that a lynching party does not consist of the total population, and usually excludes the "better element" to whom the prosecuting attorney would naturally go for evidence of the sort he wished. There is no reason to believe that the bitter prejudice which existed in Morgan County at the time of the previous trial, and then justified calling out the National Guard, has abated in the slightest degree. That there is some danger the authorities have admitted by swearing in nineteen special deputies from Birmingham to guard the defendants and their attorneys. If even these deputies are necessary, there is great doubt whether a fair trial is possible in Morgan County and it seems clear that despite the Alabama law to the contrary, a change of venue to Birmingham is desirable in the interest of justice.

ADDITIONAL testimony regarding feeling in the South is shown in the letters received by Ruby Bates, one of the two young women who were supposed to have been raped by the defendants two and a half years ago. Miss Bates, at the last trial, repudiated her previous statement implicating the Negroes, charged that it was made under duress, and testified to the innocence of all the accused. As a result, she says, she has received numerous letters from Alabama threatening her life if she returns and again gives her testimony. These letters have had sufficient effect so that she is extremely reluctant to go to Decatur, and her testimony will probably be available only as a deposition. Everyone knows that a written statement has far less effect upon the average jury than the same facts given by a witness in person. It is quite possible that the failure of Governor Miller to give an immediate and adequate promise of safety to Miss Bates may already have been the deciding factor in causing another verdict of guilty, although all intelligent persons everywhere must by now agree with Judge Horton, who presided at the last trial, that such a verdict is completely out of accord with the facts. And if harm should come to the defendants through mob action, the Governor—and all the decent people of the state of Alabama—must live under the shadow of the tragedy to the ends of their lives.

Thunder on the Right

ALTHOUGH criticism of the New Deal has come both from the right and the left, it has for a long time been uncertain on which side the most formidable and continuing opposition would consolidate. Jonathan Mitchell in his article in this issue of The New Republic, "Roosevelt on Stilts," states that the only open opposition has been on the left. Since his article was written, it has become necessary to revise this judgment. Left-wing labor organizations, it is true, continue on principle to be bitter foes of everything the administration does or may do, but they represent so tiny a fraction of the American workers that the administration will not have to give their hostility a moment's thought—if the situation of labor does in fact improve. The discontented farmers and their inflationist allies have been vocal lately, but Mr. Roosevelt has gone far enough to placate them so that he need not worry about serious revolt on this front—if his recovery program makes progress.

On the other hand, the legions of unregenerate capitalism have for some months been rallying, and are now in fairly solid ranks and marching on Washington. The signal was given first by a publicity blast from the Republican National Committee. This was timed almost to coincide with an attack by the National Association of Manufacturers—the veteran, tried-and-true enemy of organized labor and lobbyist for tariffs and all other special privileges. This association is perhaps now a little lame and querulous with age, but one could see that the organized employers meant business when there came into line the far more representative and powerful National Industrial Conference Board. Of course the National Founders' Association, the old stalwart open-shop body, lost no time in raising its anti-labor flag, and Martin W. Littleton, notorious patrioteer and counsel of open-shoppers in the post-war period, was again heard from. The New York State Chamber of Commerce came into action on the President's money policy and, finally, that most up-to-date and advanced (for employers, almost radical) organization, the United States Chamber of Commerce, has given a lead to doubting business men by a series of broadsides, not frankly aimed at the President himself, but rather at his measures. It is opposed to the gold policy, to any attempt to enforce collective bargaining with unions, and especially to any extension of governmental power over industry, whether by public ownership of utilities or by control of private business.

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With the reactionary notes being sounded so repeatedly, it will not be long before the right elements will be in full cry after the administration, and will try to carry with them all discontented factions. All that is implied by old-guard Republicanism is by way of being rallied and hurled into the breach made in its defenses since last March. It would be a mistake, however, to interpret this movement as one inspired by professional politicians in the interest of a party organization. Only because the Republican party served old-fashioned capitalism, on the whole, better than the Democrats, have these elements been associated so closely with that party in the past. They could and did use it to establish their status and enhance their wealth. Their main objective now is not to elect a Republican Congress and President, but rather to make sure of holding power in the new industrial controls that are being set up. They do not want to risk sharing that power either with bona-fide representatives of their employees or with bona-fide representatives of consumers. If the Republican party, as such, seems to be irreparably injured and if they can achieve their ends by capturing the President and the Democrats, they will prefer that course. The attacks they are now launching are evidently intended to exert pressure on him to swing in their direction. If this strategy does not work, they will naturally march into full political opposition and broaden their attack.

This opposition seems to us far more substantial and menacing than any now in sight on the President's left. It is, of course, well financed and intelligently directed. It has its roots in a long history of prestige and victory. The class consciousness of capitalists in the United States has been more solid than the class consciousness of those whom they exploit. The workers have no single organization of commanding power, and as consumers they are scarcely organized at all. The potential strength of workers and consumers is great in a period of general discontent, but in matters of theory and strategy they are divided into factions which war more bitterly with one another than with the enemy. Each wants a "united front," but only on its own terms, and consequently the front of any one faction, or even of all together, can scarcely be seen on the social map.

If the left elements were as strong as the right, or even nearly as strong, the President could manage, by playing the opponents off against each other, to continue his policy as the head of a virtual coalition, to skip lightly from one position to another like Eliza crossing the ice, and meanwhile to make at least some progress in a middle course of compromise and "coöperation." But, while the two elements in his own official family are more or less evenly balanced, with perhaps a little emphasis to the leftward, the effective pressure-groups in the social and political scene at large are far more powerful on the right. They were confused and made speechless for a while by the shocks of last winter and spring, but as time goes on it will be seen, we believe, that they are rapidly gaining confidence. Against this influence Mr. Roosevelt can still wield the general and diffuse popular support which he gained during his campaign and the early days in office, but that will evaporate more and more quickly unless he does something to solidify it around specific objectives and specific conflicts. This means that he must either surrender to the pressure from the right and drift along with it, or stimulate a more substantial organization on the left which will enable him to remain independent. In his hands is now the only effective leadership in the country which can build an immediate opposition to capitalism of the old sort.

In these circumstances, which way will the President turn? Upon his decision depends a great deal. We are inclined to believe that he will turn to the left. Of course we do not expect him to become a great Socialist leader. But he will virtually be forced to stimulate enough organized support for leftward policies to cancel out the pressure on the right, unless he expects in the end to become virtually indistinguishable from Coolidge and Hoover. His only salvation is a strong enough trade-union movement to enforce collective bargaining and to discipline the codes from the point of view of labor, and a program which will rally the consumers of the country behind a public control of prices and profits. Without this, he cannot continue to try any of the experiments on which his heart is set, and on some or other of which he depends to bring both recovery and a better social order.

For what is the theory and program of the reactionaries? It is, substantially, that things must be allowed to go on as before, with but one exception —business must be freed from whatever social control it formerly was subjected to by the anti-trust laws. Recovery was coming anyway, and Mr. Roosevelt has merely delayed it by experimenting with the currency and by imposing higher costs on business through shorter hours and higher wages and processing taxes. The banks and the capital market must be made free of the slightest effective control—otherwise capital will be timid and prosperity cannot arrive. Business must rule itself and not be hampered by labor unions or be governed by "bureaucrats"—in other words, there may be planning and control in the interest of profits, but not in the interest of farmers, labor and consumers.

Mr. Roosevelt has said too much and has gone too far to surrender to this position without a struggle. Some theorists believe that the reactionaries are right: that if you want recovery and prosperity you must leave capitalism free; and that if you want a different social order you must abolish capitalism altogether and take the consequences. But Mr. Roosevelt has begun the attempt to change capitalism enough to civilize it; he received from the electorate a mandate to make this attempt. He cannot give up his program in mid-course without ignominy.

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Russia and America Strike Hands

TWENTY years hence, historians looking back on the present day might easily decide that the resumption of diplomatic relations between the United States and Russia is one of the two or three outstanding events of the fifteen years after the end of the War. Its ramifications are so important and so numerous that we can hardly do more than list them here, returning to the discussion in future issues and in greater detail. No reader of this paper needs to be told that we regard President Roosevelt's action as extremely good news. Having argued for recognition almost from the moment when the Soviet Union came into being, we are, naturally, deeply pleased that the dream of so many years has at last become a reality. We are confident that most of the American people have finally come to share this view, though they have done so for various reasons some of which are a good deal more admirable than others. We are confident, also, that the wisdom of this action will be more and more evident as time goes by.

Is the Settlement Just?—On the whole, the terms of the settlement seem to us about as good as could have been expected and much better than the developments during the negotiations had led us to fear. The question of claims and counter-claims on both sides is left for subsequent adjudication, but there is no reason to expect that serious difficulties will arise. Russia has waived claims growing out of the occupation of Siberia; and with the Western European countries gracefully repudiating the greater part of their $11 billion of war debts to America, there seems little reason for us to haggle over the comparatively trifling sums represented by claims of American nationals against the U.S.S.R.

As for the famous old bogey man of Russian propaganda in this country, Moscow has made promises of abstinence far more sweeping than ever in the past. Not only does Russia promise to refrain from any governmental act "overt or covert, liable in any way whatsoever to injure the tranquillity, prosperity, order or security of the whole or any part of the United States, its territories or possessions," but it also undertakes "not to permit the formation or residence on its territory of any organization or group—or of representatives or officials of any organization or group . . . which has as an aim the overthrow or the preparation of the overthrow of, or bringing about by force of a change in, the political or social order of the whole or any part of United States, its territories or possessions." These promises would seem to indicate that either the Third International must end its activities in this country or must move its headquarters out of Russia to a neutral territory.

The point, on which so much stress was laid ten years ago, has come to seem rather academic. As so many persons have pointed out (and notably Leon Trotsky in The New Republic of November 1) the interest of the Russian government in world revolution has become largely one of lip service —at least for the time being. The Russian Communists now seem to believe, first, that Communism in America and other countries must be a native growth if it is to amount to anything, and second, that the most important part Russia herself can play is by becoming a brilliantly successful example of a Communist state.

It is a matter of importance that every agreement made between Comrade Litvinov and Mr. Roosevelt is reciprocal in character. The United States also agrees not to become a focal point for counter-revolution, thus making impossible the anomaly proposed in the Dies Bill, which would have forbidden all revolutionary activity in America—except that directed against the U.S.S.R!

The great campaign for religious freedom for foreigners in Russia, instigated by Mr. Roosevelt at, we believe, Secretary Hull's suggestion, turns out to have been painfully unnecessary. Mr. Litvinov was able to show by quoting the texts of various Russian laws that anybody in the U.S.S.R. may practice any religion he pleases, except that churches may not set up schools which undertake miscellaneous education.

Does the Settlement Make for Peace?—Without doubt, the most important immediate aspect of the resumption of relations is its effect upon the world situation. While it is nonsense to suppose that either Russia or the United States has any hostile military designs upon Japan, it is undoubtedly true that the renewal of official friendship between these two countries—which for the next fifty years will certainly be the strongest and most powerful in the world—will have tremendously important repercussions in the Far East. For more than a year there has been increasing danger that the military-Fascist hierarchy which today rules Japan might continue its mad course on the continent of Asia by an attack upon Russia, arguing that the power of the U.S.S.R. is rapidly growing, that conflict is inevitable sooner or later and that the time to strike is now, when the potential enemy is relatively weak. But even the seeming lunatics who guide the destinies of unhappy Japan must think twice before undertaking an overt act against a country with such a powerful friend in the Pacific as the United States. The same argument applies with hardly less force to Germany: November 17 must have been a bitter day on the Wilhelmstrasse. Hitler's chief claim to sympathy abroad has been that he was the dyke against the rising tide of Bolshevism: now he must tell his bewildered followers that either he is crazy, or Mr. Roosevelt is. Both Germany and Japan are today far more completely isolated in a hostile world than before: and in both cases, such isolation is a development on the side of peace.

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What Prospect for Trade?—To the United States, in the grip of deep depression, the prospect of Russian trade is doubly alluring at the present time—so much so, that no doubt many persons are exaggerating the possibilities in fantastic fashion. It is of course true, as numerous unfriendly commentators have pointed out, that trade by no means follows the envoys—that a few years ago Russia unrecognized was buying from the United States far more than she did from England or Germany, where her ambassadors had been received. So far as they can, the Russians will purchase in the market where they can get the goods they want, on the best available terms, and can exchange for them the largest quantities of their own produce. Nevertheless, at least five things point to a tremendous increase in Russo-American trade in the immediate future:

1. Until recently, Germany has been the chief source of exports to Russia, largely because of the Germans' liberal policy of long-term credits. But Russia cannot go on ignoring the hydrophobic hostility of Hitler to their philosophy, or his policy of autarchy which makes Russian exports to Germany increasingly difficult.

2. The present thinly disguised Tory government of Great Britain is following a policy which is discouraging to Russian trade, largely because the British, while they are delighted to sell goods to Russia, are reluctant both to extend credits and to permit Russian goods to invade what is now a protected home market.

3. The absurd restrictions thrown up by the American Treasury Department against Russian goods under the last tariff law will undoubtedly now be dropped into the discard. Indeed, the Roosevelt government has for months been working on a plan for exchange of Russian for American goods on a basis which is practically barter, and possible trade of this sort running into very large figures has been forecast by those in charge of negotiations.

4. Russia's improved economic position, as compared with a year or two ago, makes it possible for her to set aside larger quantities for export than heretofore, without the accompanying distress among her citizens, who were at one time forced to go on short rations while badly needed food was exported in exchange for machines which the government felt were even more badly needed.

5. There is no doubt that the American government, despite the frantic protests of The New York Herald Tribune and others of the same point of view, is preparing to extend to the Russian government very large long-term credits to facilitate the sale of our goods to the U.S.S.R. Already, $50 million has been loaned and spent largely for cotton. Other similar loans might have been arranged before this were it not for the pending negotiations for recognition.

In the long run, of course, it is true that the only sound basis for international trade is barter, either direct or triangular. Neither the United States nor Russia should welcome loans so large, and under such conditions, that they could not be repaid. Messrs. Coolidge and Hoover sent billions of dollars abroad in loans in order to bolster up America's export trade, refused to let goods come in as payment and thereby not only aided in bankrupting thousands of trusting investors, but helped bring on the depression. If, however, we are willing to take Russian goods, of the proper character and in the proper quantities, there is no reason why we should not facilitate this trade by very large advances.

Since world prices will almost certainly continue to rise for years to come, the Russians can hardly lose on such a transaction as they did some time ago, when they bought at high prices and had to pay with goods when the price level was enormously lower. From America's point of view, the prospect is equally encouraging. We can take from Russia products such as manganese, pulp-wood, timber, furs, etc., which offer a minimum of competition to our own industry. We can send Russia in exchange the very things whose sale abroad will help to solve the worst problems of our depression. Among these is cotton, of which we have a tremendous surplus. Temporarily, at least, we can send her meat and dairy products, of which we also have too much. Of the greatest importance is the fact that Russia needs from us heavy machinery, the one department of our economy which is lagging most seriously at present and which must be greatly increased as a fundamental fact of recovery. There is no reason in the world why trade should not be developed which would permit a tremendous volume of goods to go from this country to Russia and at the same time permit the imports from the U.S.S.R. which would serve to cover both a reasonable interest rate and amortization of the loans.

But all this is at present only a detail, however important it may be. The fundamental fact is that Russia, with one-sixth of the world's area and 160 million active and resourceful inhabitants, has again resumed normal relations with the country which is strongest today in economic resources and potential technological achievement. A significant page of history has been turned.

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Milo Reno and His Farmers

The Strike in the Corn Belt—and After

THE OFFICE of the Farmers' Union in Des Moines is a businesslike place, on a downtown corner. You work your way past the customary telephone girls and secretaries and find yourself in a big corner room where sits, behind a huge desk piled two feet deep with papers, Milo Reno, the man who made the farm strike (though he is far from controlling it today). A big, slow, Middle Western farmer-politician, a type thoroughly familiar to anyone who was brought up (as I was) on the prairie. Thick, curling black hair turning gray; keen, deep-set eyes; the easy friendliness of the politician, backed in this case by a genuine likableness which must be a valuable asset to him. Though he understands the farmer and is well qualified to be a spokesman for him, and although he is, as he carefully insists, himself a tiller of the soil, here is no case of one of a group of farmers, thrust forward by the stern demands of the times to be a spokesman for his fellows. Representing the farmers' interests is to Milo Reno a career. And why not? While the conservatives call him a Bolshevik, the really radical farmers denounce him as a demagogue; perhaps both allegations are as unfair as these simple, sweeping statements always are.

The Case for the Prosecution.—As we talked, bridges were burning, up near Sioux City; overturned milk trucks were spilling their contents in big wet patches on the clean, white cement roads. Long-distance calls came in for Milo Reno from other states telling him of farmers who had joined the struggle, urging his presence in half a dozen places at once. Leaning back in his swivel chair, ignoring his heaped desk, he told me the story of the farmer's plight and his own view of the remedies. Mr. Reno:

"They call us radicals. We're not. All we ask is that the farmers who produce this nation's food shall receive in return the cost of production. Is that radicalism?

"They say there is overproduction, that crops must be reduced. As long as there are 25 million hungry people in this country, there's no overproduction. For the government to destroy food and reduce crops at such a time is wicked. The payments Washington proposes to make the farmers are nothing but a dole. The scheme won't work, and it would be wrong if it did.

"People criticize the Farm Holiday Association for urging the farmers not to sell their food now. But what good does it do the farmer to sell for less than it cost him to produce? Every pound which goes to market on that basis makes him just that much worse off.

"They tell us that the farmer is just a gambler, that he speculated in land at high prices and now should take his medicine like the people who got caught in Wall Street. Well, who is to say that the land the farmer bought was overvalued at the time he bought it? What's an acre of land worth? It isn't like a manufactured product, where you can add up the cost figures on a sheet of paper and say that so much is the minimum selling price. God made the land. What other basis is there for its worth except its earning power? When these farm lands were bought, their price was a fair one on that basis. Remember, too, that thousands of farms never did change hands. Thousands of farmers didn't speculate, or buy more land than they could handle. Why should they suffer with the rest?"

Who Tempted Adam?—"Remember, also, that when the farmer speculated in land, there were other people who aided and abetted him—often cajoled and pleaded and all but forced him to do so. The banks were crying for the privilege of lending him the money on easy terms. Now these same bankers are the first to make the farmer suffer.

"We are asking the government to regulate the prices in this great basic American industry. We ask that the farmer shall receive a just return for his investment of capital and labor. That seems to us a reasonable demand. We intend to keep on agitating until we get justice.

"They will try to tell you that the interests of the farmer and of working men in industry are incompatible—that the farmer wants high prices for food and low prices for manufactured goods, and the working man the other way round. It's nonsense. There's no fundamental conflict between these two groups, which between them make up nearly the whole of America. The farmer is willing and eager to pay a fair price for the products of industry—a price which will ensure to every workingman a decent living. He asks in return a price for food high enough to ensure a decent living for himself.

"I'll tell you who will suffer when the farmer and the workingman get together, as they are going to do. It's the usurer. It's the middleman who preys upon both, without performing any useful service. He's got to have his claws clipped, and he's going to."

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Counting Noses.—How many farmers are behind Milo Reno in his demands? In answering this question, we must distinguish between those who support such measures as government price-fixing and currency inflation, and those who endorse the farm strike. It is my judgment that the former outnumber the latter by at least ten to one, but that both groups together are probably a minority of all the farmers of the Middle West. The rest are also desperately hard pressed, angry and despairing; but such hope as they have, they pin to Secretary Wallace and President Roosevelt.

As I reported in The New Republic last week, the farm strike, as an effort to keep food from the market, is actually confined to a few comparatively small areas—the western edge of Iowa and parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin. It has had no discernible economic effect, nor has the buying strike of the farmers, which is its second half. The Farm Holiday Association has only a few thousand dues-paying members; how many non-dues-paying sympathizers it has, no one can say. The number varies from week to week as the economic picture changes. If things continue much longer to be as bad as they now are, or get worse, the Farm Holiday movement may assume extremely serious proportions; if things get better, or the government ladles out so much money that they seem better, it will dwindle away.

The leaders of this movement recognize frankly that it is hopeless, at present, to use the farm strike as an effective economic weapon. In so far as they encourage it, they do so for its propaganda effect, because it gets the farmer on the front page, makes Washington conscious of the gravity of the problem. Whether the strikers themselves have any belief in this movement, one can only guess. Northwestern Iowa used to be a center of radical labor in the days when an army of itinerant workers moved north across the country with the end of the summer, harvesting the crops; the I.W.W.'s left their mark in that area. Some wild spirits among the farmers are in a sufficiently ugly temper to do a little smashing of property without caring whether it acomplishes any special purpose or not. In its destructive phase, the farm strike is pretty completely out of Milo Reno's control, and a matter of local and temporary inspiration. In part, it is presumably being supported by those extreme radicals whom Reno hates, and who hate him.

Said a wise Iowan, who spends his whole time studying the matter: "Farm unrest varies in accordance with special local circumstances. There are still plenty of farmers who have rich land, unmortgaged, work it intelligently, and even at the lowest prices are making a pretty good living. They are not joining any movement of protest. There are others who have been put completely down and out, like the South Dakotans who have suffered from drought, grasshoppers and low prices so long and so completely that they are flat on their backs. They don't do any hollering. It's where the farmers had something a few years ago, and have had it suddenly taken away, that the agitators find a responsive audience."

The Real Farmer Really Speaks.—So far as I know, only one attempt has been made on an important scale to find out what the dirt farmer of the corn-and-hog area actually thinks. The Des Moines Register and Leader has sent a crew of competent and carefully instructed reporters out across the state of Iowa to talk to hundreds of farmers and find out their views. These men were given a set of shrewdly prepared questions to ask; they were instructed to get back off the main highways onto the dirt roads where most of the farmers live. They took a number of counties in widely separated parts of the state, and talked to scores of farmers in each. Statisticians know that an unprejudiced random sampling of this sort is usually accurate to a high degree in finding out the truth about the situation as a whole. After reading a mass of these reports, and checking them against my own observations, I am convinced that they give a truthful picture of the farmer's state of mind.

These farmers were asked whether they approved of the farm strike, and their replies worked out at the following percentages:

In favor	*Opposed*	*Neutral*
14.28%	77.15%	8.57%

On the question whether they liked the corn-and-hog reduction program, they gave the following replies (at a time when the government attempt to explain the program in detail was just beginning to get under way):

In favor	*Opposed*	*Neutral*
36.98%	30.15%	32.87%

The farmers were asked about the proposal for the government to lend money to the farmer on unsold corn. The amount suggested when the inquiry was made was sixty cents a bushel, but this has since been cut down to forty-five cents.

In favor	*Opposed*	*Neutral*
56.86%	29.42%	13.72%

The next question was what they thought of the N.R.A. as it had affected themselves.

In favor	*Opposed*	*Neutral*
16.92%	60%	23.08%

Asked whether they approved, in general, of President Roosevelt and what he is trying to do, the farmers gave the following answers:

In favor	*Opposed*	*Neutral*
72.42%	10.34%	17.24%

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I wish space permitted me to quote the replies of these farmers at length. For candor and common sense they certainly compare very well with any average number of statements on the same themes by an equivalent number of average college graduates. (Many Iowa farmers, of course, hold degrees.) Most of them cheerfully admitted that they cannot understand the President's gold policy and therefore did not feel entitled to express an opinion on it; a large proportion had neither heard his speech on this subject on the radio nor read the text of it in the newspapers. The adverse verdict on the farm strike was usually accompanied by the comment that "it might work if all the farmers joined in—but they won't." Dozens of those who commented on the plan for the government to make loans on corn did so with the highly practical reservation that while of course they would personally be glad to get the money, they didn't see what Uncle Sam was going to do with the corn after he got it. Here and there a sturdy individualist came forward to say that he was doing all right, and didn't need any help from anybody. But such persons were extremely rare. It would only be human nature if some farmers took government help whether they needed it or not—just as long as it was being passed around.

Over and over again these farmers remarked in regard to the plan for curtailing corn-and-hog production: "It's a sin and a shame to destroy food, or prevent its being produced, when so many people are hungry." As I have suggested, some who accept part of the Milo Reno program, and particularly price-fixing by the government and currency inflation, discriminate among his proposals, decisively rejecting the farm strike.

The Bourgeois, Bourgeois Farmer.—It is perhaps worth while to point out once more that the farmer, like Shaw's chocolate soldier, is bourgeois to his boots. He is a petty capitalist, and his present grievance is that he is not being treated like one. (There are, of course, plenty of tenant farmers, but I am unable to discover that their psychology is any different from that of the men who own their land.) Here and there you will find a farmer who is a radical by intellectual conviction, just as you will do among millionaires; but the one is no more typical than the other. It is easy to find meetings in the Corn Belt attended by farmers who seem strongly radical, and are; but such meetings mean little as regards the feeling of the whole population —any more than a gathering of 5,000 Communists in Union Square, New York, signifies that the whole city is marching under the red banner. It is probably true that some who call for a radical solution for the farmers' troubles do so without taking their own proposals too seriously; like the farm strikers with whom their group overlaps, they are trying to startle the country into paying some attention to their woes. If the Corn Belt could get back to the prosperity of 1920, all but a minute fraction of the discontent would disappear, I am convinced, like beer at a politicians' picnic.

What Hope for Agriculture?—Can the farmers come back? Beginning in a few weeks, and continuing for at least a year, the federal government will provide help for the farmer on such a scale that in my judgment most of the present protest will subside. Into the corn-and-hog region alone, about half a billion dollars will be sent, increasing the cash income of the average farmer by at least 50 percent and, if prices rise as they should, 100 percent. Part of this money comes directly from the federal Treasury, in the form of corn loans and purchases of hogs; much of it will ultimately be paid by processors and consumers under the domestic-allotment plan.

The real test will come a year or more hence, when we shall know whether the allotment plan has actually succeeded in reducing production by the stipulated quotas—or indeed, at all. There are wheat experts in Chicago, not connected with the government, who insist that the 15-percent curtailment of acreage under government contract will not cut down the coming year's wheat crop by a bushel. This is because many farmers who refrained from raising wheat for the past two years, and are therefore not eligible for the agreement, are going back into production next year, lured by the hope of higher prices. There is a good deal of talk in the Middle West about bootleg production, about leasing the government your poorest land and increasing the yield per acre of the rest, and so on. It will be many months before we shall know the truth about these things.

In its simplest terms, the agricultural dilemma is this: Either we must produce for the domestic market only, and protect the farmer against foreign competition, or we must produce for the world market. If we produce for the world market, we must accept foreign goods to the value of our exports, or else make loans to foreigners with little chance that they will ever be repaid. Moreover, if we intend to produce for the world markets, we must get our costs down to a point where they are comparable with costs in, for instance, the Argentine, where land and labor are both cheaper than here. To do this, we must perhaps (with serious reservations as to certain crops and certain parts of the country) go in for large-scale and mechanized operation. We must also, of course, persuade foreign countries to accept our products—something which they are at present increasingly unwilling to do. If we want to confine our production to our domestic needs, we must either raise the purchasing power of our consumers enormously, or cut down the number of producers very greatly (in the case of cotton, by one-half).... I fear the matter is not quite so simple as it seems to appear to genial, likable Milo Reno sitting in his office in Des Moines.

Des Moines, Iowa. BRUCE BLIVEN.

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The Joyride in Associated Gas

[*This is the first of two articles describing methods employed by a large public-utility holding company in selling securities. Mr. Kefauver, who was employed for about three years in the investment department of the Associated Gas and Electric Company, writes as follows: "I wish to explain that in writing this article I was not motivated by a spirit of malice, animosity or ill will. My personal relations with owners and employees of the Associated Gas and Electric Company were always, without exception, most friendly and cordial, and this is still the case. My object is to show the American people some of the improper practices of certain public-utility holding companies, and to bring out as clearly as I can the urgent necessity of strict government control over all such companies."*—THE EDITORS.]

WERE YOU robbed by the Insulls? Were you stung by Cities Service? Did you lose your shirt in Associated Gas? If so, do you know how it all happened? I shall try to tell you, as I was very busy for three years, unwittingly helping the public to get stung.

Salesmanship Made Easy.—In the summer of 1929 I accepted a position as salesman in the Customer Ownership Department of the Associated Gas and Electric Company. This company operates electric-light and gas plants in more than half of the states in this country and in one or two foreign countries. At the time I took this position it was easy to sell securities, particularly public-utility securities. Nobody bothered much at that time to differentiate between holding-company securities and operating-company securities. Too bad! They are quite different.

At that time the Associated Gas and Electric Company was very busy selling its own stock, which was listed on the New York Curb Exchange and quoted around $65 per share. However, the company had very generously given its stockholders "rights" to buy more stock at $42 per share. Non-stockholders could buy "rights" from the Company at about $2 each, and with four rights could buy one share of stock for $42, thus making the total cost, including rights, about $50, as against a board quotation of $65 per share.

Was the Big Company giving its stockholders and the public a Christmas present? It was not. It was raising millions of dollars by one of the cleverest schemes I have ever seen. The joker was that a clause had to be written on every order, stating that the actual stock would not be delivered for six months. Meanwhile a "temporary receipt" would be sent, which could not be sold on the Exchange. By the time the suckers received their actual certificates the stock was selling for less than they had paid for it. It is now quoted at $1 to $2 per share.

The writer sold about a hundred thousand dollars' worth of the stock, making $2,000 in commissions during his very first month with the company. He rubbed his eyes and asked himself, "How long has this been going on?" He had never seen anything so easy to sell. What stockholder wouldn't pay $42, or if a non-stockholder $50, for shares selling at $65 on the open market? Never mind about the six-months clause. The stock would probably double in price by that time.

The Associated Gas and Electric Company was also conferring another favor upon Mr. and Mrs. Public in those days. It was kindly allowing holders of first-mortgage bonds of its subsidiary operating companies to exchange those bonds for its stock, usually upon the basis of two shares of stock for each $100 worth of bonds. The company took the bonds and the former bondholders took the stock. I did my share in this sorry business. I didn't know any better. I received the commendation of the management for persuading the executor of one estate to take $30,000 worth of the stock, for inducing the trustee of a young child's inheritance to trade in $10,000 of perfectly good bonds, and for inveigling other trustees into trading various amounts. Today the bonds are still good, while the stock is practically worthless.

How We Planned the Sortie.—Five of us, all new men, were bundled off to Rochester, New York, for our first Customer Ownership campaign. The Associated Gas and Electric Company had recently purchased the gas and electric-light company operating in Rochester. I have since been on many other campaigns, but this one was never duplicated. The general manager of the whole department was there in person, and we were thrilled to meet the Great Man. He held an opening meeting for the forty-two salesmen and told us what we should and should not do. The company had about three thousand employees in Rochester, and every employee was expected to sell securities during the campaign, which lasted for five weeks. It didn't matter if he happened to be an officer, a bookkeeper, a truck driver, a meter reader, a janitor or a ditch-digger—every employee was supposed to sell securities, and most of them did. The various departments were divided into teams, and one salesman was placed in charge of each team, thus listing forty-two teams on the roster.

I drew a team consisting for the most part of

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day laborers from the gas plant. Some of the luckier salesmen drew teams in the office building, comprising the more intelligent employees who could better sell securities and thus make more money for the salesman. Over half my team were Italians, many of whom could not speak English. Were they exempted? They were not. I talked to them through an interpreter, trying to "steam them up" to go out and sell to their friends, relatives and acquaintances. It was emphatically stipulated that it was in the direct line of duty for every employee, as such, to sell securities to his family, friends, doctor, dentist, storekeeper—everyone with whom he came into contact.

After the employees were divided into teams and the salesmen appointed "team captains," a big opening rally was held. Music and refreshments were provided, and the affair took place at night, in order that as many employees as possible might attend. The manager of the Customer Ownership Department was introduced, with appropriate ceremonies accompanied by an exhortation to the employees to follow the directions of the visiting manager during the campaign. The big mogul of the Customer Ownership Department then told the employees why the campaign was being held, what they were going to sell, how to sell it, and how fortunate they were to have the privilege of selling the Big Company's securities to their families and friends. Then submanagers and sundry other yes-men described various details of the campaign, and the last speaker was a noted orator brought in from outside the city to tell the employees the value of loyalty and of serving their company to the utmost. The meeting ended with music and dancing, and with enthusiasm for the campaign running high.

What We Sold.—We were to sell a "Six Percent Convertible Debenture," but the salesmen and employees generally referred to such wares as "bonds." Of course a bond is supposed to have some sort of lien on assets, or be secured by collateral pledged with reliable trustees, but our "Six Percent Convertible Debentures" had absolutely nothing securing them—they were merely promissory notes AND THEY NEVER CAME DUE.

Was there any market for these "bonds"? No, indeed. On this point the Associated Gas and Electric Company made one of the most significant mistakes in its entire history. The employees were told to sell the debentures with a promise that the company would buy them back from any investor at $98, or only 2 percent less than he paid for them, at any such time as the investor needed the money. Let us digress here and see how this policy worked out.

In the various campaigns that followed, the Associated Gas and Electric Company sold throughout the country nearly a hundred million dollars' par value of these and similar debentures. Most of them were sold with the "refund guarantee." When the stock-market collapse occurred and the subsequent depression came on, the company was called upon to make good its promise to take back the debentures at $98. This it did for a short time, but when it became swamped with requests for refunds it flatly refused to make good its promise given through employees and salesmen. The result was that these debentures were recently quoted at $9.

The company now claims it circumvented its promise to make refunds at $98 by the following process: On the circular describing the debentures there was a little clause which stated that the Associated Gas and Electric Company had the right at any time to call for conversion of the debentures into its preferred stock, thus compelling the investor to convert regardless of his own wishes in the matter. This is precisely what the company did. Last year it called for compulsory conversion into preferred stock, and it has now passed the dividends upon all of its preferred shares. However, it generously gave the victims the "privilege" of taking a new form of debenture, called a "convertible obligation," in lieu of the preferred stock. This new "obligation" carried the proviso that the company could pay the interest in cash, scrip, stock or property. Therefore the poor investor is really no better off than in preferred stock, as these new "obligations" are not paying anything now. They paid interest in scrip for a few months, then stopped even that, and now, like the preferred stock, yield no income whatsoever.

Was not this a clever performance? The Associated Gas and Electric Company sold something like a hundred million dollars, face value, of these so-called "debentures" to tens of thousands of trusting investors, mostly its own customers, on the idea that they were buying a "bond" with a refund guarantee of $98 upon demand, and then by calling for conversion into preferred stock the company claims to have invalidated the refund guarantee and also rids itself of the obligation to pay interest, since dividends can be passed on preferred stock or the new "obligations" without default.

Later I shall tell you some rather diverting little tales of other clever practices of this big company. Meanwhile, let us revert to our campaign where we left it after the big opening rally.

The Bombardment Begins.—Here we have forty-two salesmen, many of whom knew nothing about investment securities, who were given absolutely no training and consequently didn't know what they were talking about, leading forty-two teams comprising the local operating company's three thousand employees in a concerted drive to sell the marvelous "debentures" to the citizens of Rochester.

The blind led the blind. Some of the employees called the debentures "Debenishures." Others called them "Rebentures." Some called them "Bonds," others "Stock," and still others "Shares." The enthusiasm aroused among the poor deluded employees by their officers, department heads and team captains was so great that they sallied forth to battle and the orders poured in, some days in

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stacks a foot high. Many thousands of the citizens were sold the "Debenishures," as were also many of the families and relatives of the employees.

They were sold either for cash or on the instalment plan, and in units of $100 or over. A gullible native could buy a $100 debenture and pay for it at the rate of $10 down and $10 a month. Interest was paid him on his instalments until he had paid in full for his debenture; "just like in the bank," as the salesman would tell his victim. Oh yes, just like in the bank! Only better, because he got 6 percent interest as against 4 percent in the bank; that is, unless the company exercised its "conversion privilege," but this point was seldom mentioned.

Each salesman would hold "pep meetings" every morning for his own team, to "steam them up." And did we do it? Inasmuch as few of us knew what we were talking about—and those of us who did were advised to keep our opinions to ourselves—everybody had a grand time and pepped each other up until Rochester was thoroughly canvassed and had a beautiful selling job done to it.

We had a publicity department which turned out tons of sales literature, pep bulletins and other varieties of high-pressure ammunition aimed at both the employees and the prospects. We had little discs to fit over every telephone in the office and plant, asking, "Have you sold your debentures today?" We had daily "Progress Bulletins" telling the number of debentures sold by each team up to date and the percentage of quota sold. We had special placards printed to put up all over the offices and plants, exhorting the employees to sell more and yet more. There was a mimeograph department used exclusively by the salesmen to write personal messages and "pep sheets" to their teams.

All Work and No Play.—The employee received $2 commission on every $100 worth of debentures he sold. The salesman got fifty cents per debenture, whether he assisted in the sale or not, so long as the sale was made by an employee on his team. Then, too, there were numerous cash prizes for the individuals selling the most debentures and for the team selling the greatest percentage of its quota.

The team which eventually won the first prize of $300 oversold its quota more than four times. Some of the salesmen made well over $1,000 in commissions. In addition to their commissions, the salesmen received salaries varying from $150 to $250 per month, plus all of their traveling and living expenses and mileage on their cars. Many of them padded their expense accounts and made nearly as much out of them as they did in commissions.

Many of the salesmen also had the idea that an "employees' campaign" was an affair in which the employees did the work and the salesmen merely enjoyed themselves. The lucky parasites with intelligent teams of office employees and junior executives had only to show up in the morning, collect the previous day's sales, and then exhort the employees to sell more.

Down at the Gas Works.—I had a good time too, but I had a silly idea that an expense account was a list of items to show what you had actually spent, and besides, those of us who were stuck down at the gas works with illiterate teams had to work from morning to night to make a decent showing. I can especially remember one of my best employee-salesmen, a little Italian who spoke broken English and wanted to do his friends the favor of selling them the wonderful "Debenishures." He would take me with him on the time off the management gave him to use in selling, and would call upon his friends. We would go in, sit down, and he would talk volubly to them in Italian while I looked on and wondered what he was saying. Every so often he would stop and ask me in English some question or other that had been asked him, then would translate my answer and go on with his selling talk. Usually the prospect would then get up and offer us some wine. Of course it was not polite to refuse, and we didn't want to, anyway, so the deal would be closed.

Toward the close of the campaign I personally offered a five-dollar prize to every employee on my team who sold $5,000 or more of the debentures, and shortly had to give five such prizes. The managers wouldn't let me put that item on my expense account, but it helped to put me "over the top" with 175 percent of my quota despite the illiteracy of my team. My quota was $50,000, and I sold over $85,000 of the beautifully colored paper.

Celebrating the Victory.—That was the greatest campaign the Associated Gas and Electric Company ever held. During a period of five weeks we sold a grand total of $7 million of debentures, with more than $1 million coming in on the last day. How was that for an achievement? And that was only one campaign in one small portion of the company's vast territories.

It was such a gratifying record that one of the big managers came back to Rochester and gave a farewell party. He hired an exclusive country club for the occasion, gave us a splendid banquet with professional entertainers to soothe the weary salesmen, and with quart bottles of whisky dotting the tables like flies. Most of the men got gloriously drunk, particularly a big manager. He presented a ludicrous picture, standing at the head table trying to make a speech to us and swaying back and forth on his feet as he proudly proclaimed to all and sundry how beautifully drunk he was. It was a fitting climax to a hectic, memorable "campaign." Everyone had made a lot of money and had a grand time—except the deluded citizenry who bought the "Debenishures." After all, it only cost the citizens of Rochester a mere $7 million.

And if you, dear reader, ever bought a "Debenishure" or a similar piece of claptrap from the meter reader, truck driver or bookkeeper of your local utility company, you now have some idea of how the job was done. CHARLES B. KEFAUVER.

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Mr. Roosevelt on Stilts

WE HAVE never before had anything like the Roosevelt administration. Except perhaps for early assemblies of the Founding Fathers, there has never been a government in this country which has acted so rapidly, and imprinted its influence on so many varied areas of our national life. It is not enough to say that Mr. Roosevelt has been faced with a great emergency. So was Mr. Hoover, and he was as immobile as a lump of mud. Nor, unless you are a hero worshiper, can you explain it by Mr. Roosevelt's superior personal virtue.

What is it that makes the Roosevelt administration tick? For anyone wishing to investigate this problem, I have a few small suggestions. The first is that the administration is essentially a coalition government. From its inception, it has been made up of clearly recognizable Right and Left wings. On the Right, you find Mr. Lewis W. Douglas and what is now called the "Treasury crowd"; on the Left stand Mr. Tugwell, Mr. Berle, Dr. Wolman and a long list of liberal and radical lawyers, college professors and economists.

You find this principle of coalition running straight down through the administration. In the N.R.A. you find Mr. Roosevelt's deputy, General Johnson, perched between an Industrial Advisory Board, representing employers, and a Labor Advisory Board, representing the workers. In the words of General Johnson: "Our whole organization is designed to maintain balance. An industrialist and a labor leader sit in on everything we do." Over in the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, you discover authority almost evenly balanced between a group unabashedly representing Big Business and the group headed by Mr. Tugwell. Perhaps the most startling application of the coalition principle was Mr. Roosevelt's selection, last summer, of Professor George F. Warren, exponent of the commodity dollar, and Professor O. M. W. Sprague, strait-laced economic classicist, as the two chief experts of the administration's unofficial committee on monetary policy. Here the coalition has signally failed to coalesce and—as is apparent in Mr. Roosevelt's recent pronouncements—the administration still lacks a permanent, agreed-upon monetary program.

I suggest that this coalition principle is the thing which gives the Roosevelt administration its great mobility. In a sense, a coalition government can be looked upon as simply a parliamentary form of dictatorship. If you are Adolf Hitler, you beat up your opponents with rubber clubs, fling them into concentration camps, or kill them. In a democratic country you bring the opposition inside your administration. In either case, you succeed in rendering your opponents temporarily voiceless, and ensure yourself such freedom of action as a partisan government can never have.

This comparison between a dictatorship and a parliamentary coalition, however, has one obvious flaw. Hitler presumably can hold power as long as he can keep his Storm Troops fed, uniformed and supplied (in defiance of the Versailles Treaty) with modern arms. On the other hand, a parliamentary coalition can be broken up the moment either the Right or Left Wing decides to present its collective resignation and walk out. The head of a coalition government, accordingly, can exercise his freedom of action only within limits; the moment he irrevocably alienates his support on either the Right or Left, he is through. In the case of Mr. Roosevelt, you find that while he has acted with amazing boldness and imagination on a multitude of questions, he has shown great reluctance in facing up to a fight on any single clear-cut issue.

The great issue facing Mr. Roosevelt on the day of his inauguration was that of banking reorganization. The demand was laid before Mr. Roosevelt by the Left-wing members of his administration, headed by Mr. Berle, that he take over the banking system bodily. Failing this, it was urged in the strongest terms that he seize the opportunity created by the complete banking collapse to establish social control over at least investment of new capital. Without such control over new capital, the Left wing argued, the rebuilding of a stabilized economic structure would be made immensely difficult, probably impossible.

There is some evidence that Mr. Roosevelt personally agreed with this point of view. But to have acted on it would have meant that Mr. Wee Willie Woodin, Mr. Douglas and the whole Right half of the administration would walk out. On the other hand, Mr. Roosevelt had to act in some manner or face revolt on the Left. What in fact Mr. Roosevelt did was to accept the present Securities Act, pet brain-child of Professor Frankfurter, which leaves the private investment bankers substantially untouched, but under most stringent federal policing. Mr. Woodin, Mr. Douglas and the financial interests for whom they are spokesmen did not dare refuse the Securities Act, lest worse befall. Conversely, the Left wingers, having obtained the Securities Act, were able to swallow their chagrin at failing to gain more far-reaching legislation.

As a result of this episode, the limits within which the administration is able to maneuver in its banking policy are now fixed. It cannot move to take control of investment out of the hands of the bankers, because that is the point at which the adminis-

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tration's Right wing will begin to fight. Neither can it relax the provisions of the Securities Act (apparently equivalent restrictions are soon to be imposed on the New York Stock Exchange), because that is the place at which the Left wing has strung its barbed wire and thrown up trenches. However, the interesting thing is the freedom for experimentation, within these limits, which Mr. Roosevelt has obtained. Through the Public Works Administration and the R.F.C., the administration has been in effect dictating the course of new capital investment for several months.

A second decisive issue facing Mr. Roosevelt on Inauguration Day was that of the railroads. Many railroads were already in hock to the R.F.C., and as a first step towards establishing social control of industry, the taking over of the railroads by the government seemed clearly indicated. But Mr. Roosevelt refused to risk a fight on the issue of government ownership. At the same time, because of the Left members of the administration, he could not leave the railroad problems untouched. The result was the appointment of Mr. Joseph B. Eastman as Transportation Coördinator. Within the narrow area allotted him, Mr. Eastman has performed minor miracles. He has deflated the salaries of railroad presidents, made a belligerent attempt to bring down the price of steel rails and has at last bullied the railroads into meeting bus and truck competition by radically improved equipment and by the establishment of bus and truck lines of their own.

The administration's outstanding achievement is the N.R.A. In the N.R.A., as we have seen, the boundaries of possible action are openly indicated. It must not move far enough to the Left to outrage Mr. Myron C. Taylor and his colleagues of the present employers' Advisory Board and drive them into resigning. Similarly, it cannot shift far enough to the Right to make inevitable resignations from Dr. Wolman, Mr. Sidney Hillman, Mr. John L. Lewis and the labor group.

In the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, sister organization of the N.R.A., you lately have found this same coalition set-up. At the A.A.A.'s inception, Mr. Bernard M. Baruch and Mr. Thomas L. Chadbourne, both tagged with Wall Street, were the most insistent advocates of crop limitation and processing taxes, and these proposals had the entire approval of the administration's Left members. In its first few weeks, accordingly, the A.A.A. buzzed merrily along amid hand claps and cheers from all sides. But as soon as the A.A.A. began to formulate codes for agricultural products, the familiar split between Right and Left at once appeared. So far the A.A.A. has approved of a number of regional milk codes (although not a national milk code) and has made progress towards writing codes for tobacco products and retail foods. In each case, the code represents a great advance in the organization of the industry, and in each case all fighting issues are being carefully sidestepped.

Recently there has been a great deal of talk about "the Roosevelt revolution." Large numbers of people regard Mr. Roosevelt as a daring innovator, who somehow is going to bring about radical changes for the better. Mr. Roosevelt is a man of facile mind, who embraces novel ideas with eagerness, and he is certainly bringing about marked changes, but this correspondent begs leave to doubt that these changes will touch essential parts of our capitalist structure. Just now, except for Mr. James M. Beck and Messrs. Earl Browder and Robert Minor, everyone in the country is ostensibly coöperating with the President. Or, what politically comes to the same thing, except for the Communists, no organized group is openly attacking him. This is a very advantageous position to be in. The only thing which can make Mr. Roosevelt abandon this position, it seems to me, is the rise of a real opposition on either the Right or Left. Meanwhile, he can cover a great deal of ground by the use of his stilts of the Right and the Left.

By its nature no coalition can last indefinitely. It is possible that the reactionaries of the country may succeed in building up a formidable Right opposition to Mr. Roosevelt in the congressional elections next fall. Such a party would filch away from Mr. Roosevelt his present half-fearful, half-greedily-hopeful Right supporters, and he and his administration would logically be forced definitely to the Left. It will take more than Mr. Ogden L. Mills and his group of moth-eaten Republican hacks, however, to create a serious Right opposition; it will need to be a party stretching far down into the middle class. It is similarly conceivable, particularly if the economic situation grows suddenly worse, that a mass movement of industrial workers, poor farmers and farm laborers might spring up, although unhappily this does not now, despite Mr. Milo Reno, seem likely. In that case, you would find Mr. Roosevelt moving rapidly to the Right.

At least once in conversation with friends, Mr. Roosevelt half-jokingly has referred to himself as Kerensky. Certainly the two men resemble each other in their devotion to the coalition principle. No other head of a state in modern times has attempted to maintain a coalition of such widely separated and hostile elements as did Kerensky. It is worth remembering, moreover, that ramshackle as the group was around Kerensky, he succeeded in keeping it together until a real opposition arose beside him, in his case, the Left party of Lenin and Trotsky, which first forced him to the extreme Right and then defeated him. Risky as prediction is, it seems to me doubtful if Mr. Roosevelt will encounter important organized opposition from either Left or Right for many months to come.

Perhaps the most revelatory thing about the mechanics of the Roosevelt administration is the attitude of mind you find in Washington among admin-

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istration members. Hardly a week passes but you are informed, in great secrecy, that Mr. Douglas is about to resign, that his resignation is written and lying on his desk. Mr. Douglas, you are told, still feels the utmost loyalty to the President, but ence of Mr. Tugwell and "the Reds." Then a day or so later, you find Mr. Douglas coming out of the White House, face beaming. About that time, likewise in strict confidence, you learn of a meeting of Left-wing members of the administration at which they pledged themselves to resign in a body. Then presently you hear that Mr. Tugwell has been summoned to the White House and that all is well.

You find much the same emotional pattern among the business men and union labor leaders coming to Washington. At one time, last summer, the heads of the United States Steel Corporation were prepared to defy the administration and throw the question of the N.R.A. codes into the courts. They believed, or said they believed, that Mr. Roosevelt had gone suddenly Communist, and wished to abolish private property. Then matters were talked over with Mr. Gerard Swope, Mr. Walter C. Teagle and the then N.R.A. Industrial Advisory Board, and the steel chiefs began to feel better and decided to go along with the administration. When Mr. Jesse H. Jones, a few weeks ago, told the bankers' convention in Chicago of the administration's proposed program of credit expansion, the bankers were ready to lynch him. Lately quiet conversations have been held with Mr. Walter J. Cummings, Mr. Henry Bruere and "the Treasury crowd," and several of the great New York and Chicago banks have agreed to offer their preferred stock, as the administration wished, to the R.F.C. Labor leaders come to Washington fulminating against the administration and talk to Secretary Perkins and Dr. Wolman, or see Senator Wagner's mediation boards traveling about the country, and go away puzzled, suspicious but ready to believe in Mr. Roosevelt a little longer.

There is one last suggestion I should like to make. That is that the coalition principle in the Roosevelt administration finds an echo in Mr. Roosevelt's personal character. We have never had a President with more genuine understanding and friendliness for underprivileged men and women. You will recall his sympathetic treatment of the bonus army last spring in Washington. The appearance of comradeship he has shown on his visits to the Civilian Conservation Camps is wholly sincere. On the other hand, we have never before had a President who chose to spend his vacations on Mr. Vincent Astor's yacht. It is possible that only when Mr. Roosevelt feels he can touch the men of the bonus army with one hand, and Mr. Astor with the other, can he function at the top of his capacity.

JONATHAN MITCHELL.

Washington.

Washington Notes

Dropping Two Pilots—The Douglas Budget—Wall Street's New Bugaboo—Choking Off Tax Losses

THERE is this to be said of the retirement of the Messrs. Woodin and Acheson from the Treasury and the appointment of Henry Morgenthau, Jr.—the President now has a Secretary of that Department in sympathy with his new financial policy. It had become notorious around Washington that Mr. Acheson and Budget Director Douglas were wholly out of tune with the fiscal direction of the administration. With Mr. Woodin's health precluding full attention to his job, Mr. Acheson was in sole charge of the Treasury. It was a ridiculous position and could not continue.

So far as Mr. Douglas is concerned, his job of balancing the budget has nothing to do with financial policy, and it makes no difference whether he agrees with what is being done or not, so long as Mr. Roosevelt does not mind having a man in that position who is out of harmony with the gold-purchase plan and the public-works program. At any rate the present belief is that Mr. Douglas, at the request of the President, will stick to his job. To be fair to the Budget Director, he has not in any way concealed his views from the President, and has been ready to retire at the slightest hint from him.

It has always been said of Mr. Douglas that he was too much of an Ogden Mills type of Democrat, and that he could not have been so popular as he was among Republicans in the last administration had there been any real difference in his outlook. Such, it may be mentioned, was the opinion of the Honorable John N. Garner when he was Speaker of the House, and I think it is altogether likely that such is still Garner's opinion now that he has crossed to the other wing of the Capitol.

If Mr. Douglas holds on, the chances are that his budget will be under rather severe fire from Congress when it convenes in January. It is clear already that he will be held personally responsible for the injustices—many of them unavoidable—which have been done disabled veterans when the administration pruning knife, wielded by him, was used to obtain such wholesale reductions. It is a question whether, with full knowledge of this, Mr. Douglas will want to hold on after the first of the year. Personally, I should not be surprised to hear of his retirement any day. If he stays, he will be more or less isolated and, one would think, bound to feel his isolation.

So far as Mr. Morgenthau is concerned, there are, of course, two attitudes toward him. His selection was an undoubted shock to the so-called sound-money people. The anti-inflationists and gold-standard adherents see in his appointment a distinct stride toward the Left and no longer have the least doubt that a more direct form of inflation is being contemplated. It is pointed out that, while the elder Morgenthau is a banker, the new Treasury head is devoid of banking experience, is really a tree specialist and the publisher of an agricultural journal. They see no other reason for his appointment than that he is in accord with the Warren-Rogers plan and will wholeheartedly coöperate with the President. In brief, the banking world gener-

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ally reacted unfavorably to the Morgenthau appointment and is at the moment filled with apprehension and alarm. On the other hand there is the belief that, in view of the recent Senate Committee exposures of bankers and the banking business, it is an excellent thing not to have a banker as head of the Treasury. There is a deep popular distrust at this time of all bankers, and it is to some extent shared by Mr. Roosevelt. He has never wanted a banker as Secretary of the Treasury and he made that fact completely plain even before his inauguration.

At no time did he seriously consider a banker for the place. On the contrary, he let it be known that the one thing upon which he would insist was that his Secretary of the Treasury have no Wall Street affiliations. His first choice was Senator Carter Glass, who certainly had no such affiliations. Mr. Woodin, his second choice, was not wholly free from them. He had been a member of the board of the Chase Bank and was on the directorate of numerous large corporations. But Mr. Roosevelt knew him well and realized that he would "go along" with him whatever were his views.

In Mr. Morgenthau, Mr. Roosevelt finds a man who seems to fit his bill of particulars perfectly. He has not had, it is true, any banking experience, but he has been a student of finance and is in complete harmony with the Warren gold-purchase plan, was in fact, at one time, a student under the Professor at Cornell. The orthodox financiers in New York shudder at the Morgenthau appointment, regard it as a step to the Left, and feel that he is at heart an inflationist. I am not in a position to outline Mr. Morgenthau's financial views, but if those who know him best can be relied upon, he is a well balanced, extremely capable, vigorous young man, of a decidedly progressive type, who feels keenly that the flaws in our financial set-up were as much responsible for the troubles of the nation as anything else. He is eager to correct them.

This may mean inflation, but I doubt it. The truth of course is that further inflationary steps do not depend upon Mr. Morgenthau at all, but altogether upon the President. He has the power. He could inflate had Mr. Woodin and Mr. Acheson remained in the service and he can refuse to inflate with Mr. Morgenthau as the Acting Secretary. It is not and it is not going to be Mr. Morgenthau's responsibility. The point about Mr. Morgenthau is that whatever further step the President takes in the financial plan to which he is now committed, he will not only have from Mr. Morgenthau personal loyalty but also a coöperation which he could not count upon before.

Of greater concern to some of our more important captains of finance, who drift in and out of Washington on various missions, is the appointment that came almost simultaneously with that of Mr. Morgenthau—to wit, that of Professor Groves of the University of Wisconsin as chief tax adviser of the Treasury. Professor Groves is a close friend of ex-Governor Philip La Follette and was his principal taxation adviser during his term as Governor. He served one term in the Wisconsin Legislature, elected on the La Follette ticket, but is best known as a specialist on the subject of taxation of tax-exempt bonds.

The bringing of Professor Groves into the administration as a tax expert seems to mean that Mr. Roosevelt intends to have a tax program of his own to lay before the next Congress, rather than leave the imposition of new taxes in the hands of that body without administration guidance. The tendency of the President, the tendency of Congress and the tendency of the people generally is toward closing the loopholes through which the men of large income escape payment. The shocking revelations of the way in which this has been done, beginning with Mr. Mitchell, continuing through the members of the Morgan firm, and on down the line, have created a sentiment in this country not easy to exaggerate.

What the public realizes is the simple fact that, in good times and bad, rich men have found means within the law to avoid carrying their share of the tax burden. If there is anything in our system more in need of legislative attention than this, it is not apparent at the moment. It is a question upon which there appears no difference of opinion. The iniquities and the inequalities of the present law are conceded. The presence of Professor Groves in the Treasury Department as chief tax adviser is an indication that the administration means to attack the problem in a scientific and thoroughgoing way.

Washington. T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Dark Days in Detroit—Cracking Down on Henry—Voting Under the Gun—The Skeleton in the Vaults

I HAVE just had another peep at the city of Detroit. Once more its mood is changed. About six weeks ago I spent some time there looking at its banking situation. Then a mild glow of hope was discernible. This city, hit from within and without as no other American city has been hit—crushed under the weight of the nationwide depression and ravaged from within by its promoter-bankers—had up to a few weeks ago begun to feel that, perhaps, the dawn was about to break. But, alas, the transient little boomlet which got under way in May and June and July, had begun to languish some months ago, though the public of Detroit was hardly let in on the secret. Automobile production, which was rising since February, has been falling off steadily since July. And at this moment practically all of the plants—at least all the large ones except Ford—are closed down "to prepare for the new models."

Whatever the reason for the shutdown, the result is the same—a suspension of pay rolls in a city which is already supine. While the suspension of work in the factories may in some measure be due to preparation for new models, it is also due to the fact that production went along a little fast, that dealers were stocked and that the bloom has faded from the cheek of Mr. Roosevelt's Lady Confidence.

But what of the automobile industry and the N.R.A.? Up to now the public knows little of that save that General Johnson has been itching to crack down on Henry Ford. The inference is that there is some essential difference between Henry Ford's observance of the N.R.A.'s requirements and the attitude of the other motor makers. I cannot for the life of me, however, see where the difference lies, save that Ford has been open and frank about his

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position, while the others have been merely capitalizing the Blue Eagle.

There is no difference between Ford's position and that of the others in the matter of wages and hours, save that Ford has generally done a little better by his workers than the others. On the question of collective bargaining, Ford has been no less unfriendly to that than the others. Detroit has been notoriously an open-shop town. Up to the present the question of collective bargaining has not arisen in the Ford plants in Detroit. There was a minor disturbance in his New Jersey shops and there he was held to have met the requirements of the code—though I do not think he did. But the question has arisen in a large way in the plants of the other motor makers. The Chrysler Company has already established a company union. If that is observing the N.R.A. requirements, it would be interesting to know what progress has been made under N.R.A. Company unions have always been used as a weapon against real labor organization.

Detroit has been having an exciting strike of tool and die workers. They claim to have a membership of 17,000. The union is an inter-company union, though not organized by the A. F. of L. The leaders claim it was organized after the A. F. of L. failed to display any interest in their case. They struck many weeks ago, demanding a wage of one dollar an hour for the highest skilled workers and around eighty cents an hour for certain others. They wanted the forty-hour week and recognition of their union. The motor makers could hardly have behaved worse at the outset if they were as hostile to N.R.A. as they claim Mr. Ford is. There was a good deal of violence and finally a settlement was effected. But the union did not get its demands by a long shot and the motor makers refused to recognize this union. They insisted that in making this settlement they were dealing with their employees as such and not in any way with their organization.

In the meantime, General Johnson fulminates against Henry Ford, while Mr. Alfred Sloan serves as one of the advisers of the N.R.A. under the aegis of the Department of Commerce. What is more, while the violent top-sergeant of the N.R.A. uses his post to carry on a feud against Ford, we see Myron C. Taylor, head of the Steel Corporation, being appointed to the industrial advisory board of the N.R.A. along with Mr. Sloan—Myron Taylor, whose Steel Corporation has been in a bitter struggle with the N.R.A. over the disgraceful captive-mine situation.

Indeed, the government had to drive the Steel Corporation into a reluctant arrangement to deal with its employees. And in order to decide by whom and how the employees would be represented, an election is being held in the captive-mine areas. But this election was subject to the interference and control of the Steel Corporation. Hence, to protect the workers, the government has had to interpose its authority and is to provide full protection for the plebiscite. It is interesting to observe that the government has selected a man who is regarded as an authority on turbulent and dangerous elections. He was used by the government to supervise the hotly contested election which was held under the auspices of the United States in Nicaragua. Thus we are called on to protect the rights of workers in an election in the United States from the Steel Corporation as we protected the rights of citizens in Nicaragua from its little tyrant. And at this very moment the Secretary of Commerce names the head of this offending corporation as a member of the industrial advisory board of the N.R.A. To be sure, this board has no authority, but merely acts in an advisory capacity, as do the labor and consumer boards.

Is the office of the Comptroller of the Currency making any studies of the numerous banks which were closed these last few years, in order to determine why they failed? That department, when Mr. Hoover was in office, expended an immense amount of energy on a lot of superficial statistical studies to prove that our bank failures were due to the smallness of our rural banks. But we must know now that this was not the reason. The office of the Comptroller is in possession of the facts. It could make an immense contribution to the whole subject if it were to engage a first-class economist who was never connected with any of our numerous brokerage, investment and banking houses which employ economists—and turn him loose with a staff of accountants and statisticians to study, to lay his finger on the precise cause of failure in each case. I have just seen a statement of a small bank outside of Detroit which went down in the general disaster last winter. This bank had about six million dollars in assets. The president, other officers, directors of the bank, personally and through corporations which they controlled, had loans from this bank equaling almost a million and a half—or nearly a quarter of the assets of the bank, while the deposits of these gentlemen and their corporations were only about $17,000. Would not a careful study of failures like this one reveal a wealth of facts on which to base future legislation?

JOHN T. FLYNN.

Angels and Ministers of Grace

WHEN I come to Miss Mae West's "I'm No Angel," I always find myself thinking in two directions.

The first is that day when Louis XIV inquired of the great Boileau as to what great writer had most honored his reign. Everybody knows the story: "Molière, sire," replied Boileau, upon which Louis said that he would not have thought it. I am, of course, not Boileau, nor Miss Mae West Molière; and even more certainly there is no Roi Soleil for this season who might, out of a combined splendor and proper desire for judgment, ask the question. Renouncing the prestige of that comparison, therefore, I only say that if I were asked what performance in acting had most honored our theatre in this season I should say Miss Mae West.

The situation in speaking thus is not easy. There is always the possibility of novel desires in surprising or startling or defying, like a little Catholic boy eating beef on Friday, a little Jewish boy eating ham, the elephant on the bucket in the circus, the liberal professor archly novel before his class, and, lowest of all, the critic coming out with declarations hot and newsy. Ham, beef, circus and even the professor are human and excusable; but the critic trying the novel and succulent is a poor thing. To say that Miss West's acting in "I'm No Angel" and some of

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the ensemble directing too, for that matter, knocks anything on the New York stage into a cocked hat, seems to me obvious. And yet I am filled with a humble fear lest any value in what I say may be diminished by some suspicion of my striving to be among the discovery boys. Their critical pranks trickle with rancor into solemn societies of the earnest and cultured, soothe the ignorant and gaddy in New York, and confirm such natural instincts as preferred all along the casual riff-raff now raised for them into great art. On the other hand how silly it is for a critic to come sacerdotally to the case of Mae West, as if to make a cause and crusade out of what is the shine and precision of real theatre. When wise, you take that up always as you take up sun and rain, trying to convey to others the nature of the refreshment. It is another matter to compound improvement out of what, despite its worthy purpose, is drawn but dully and with labor down from heaven. People who prefer "Alien Corn," "American Dream" or "The Left Bank," and that sort of thing, to "I'm No Angel" are lucky; we shall have plenty of drama for them, along with its characteristic production, for a long time.

The second direction of my thought is that, considering the shock Miss West's new picture will provide for certain people, there is irony to the title itself. Angels, as everyone knows, derive from Eroses, those little boys, among the most perfect illustrations of Freudian classic vice, whose figures progressed eventually, by way of the sarcophagi, into Christian usage, and became blest. The censorship of their anatomies led, not unlike the case of capons, to an increase otherwise—for angels mostly wings. This compromise turned out an instance of celestial harmony; since among worshipers, few men while on earth insist on being like angels anatomically, and few women resist the spiritual epithet. Archeologically, morally and statistically, therefore, "I'm No Angel" is a title proper to this picture.

The screen for "I'm No Angel" provides the usual impressive subdivisions of genius behind almost any moving picture. The winks by A, face ripples by B, songs by C, musical version by D, fourth-class suggestions by E, etc.; but the story by and large is credited to Miss West. If you saw her "Diamond Lil," this is easy to believe, plus some additional convictions, to be hidden within your bosom, as to her share in the directing generally. The story is involved but not complex, about a lady in a circus, as chief attraction, the men buzzing into the tent where she dances, the circus boss seeking her love but rebuffed, and the boss's pickpocket accomplice the favored one. A man from Dallas makes eyes. The lover surprises the visit, knocks him out, takes his ring; money is needed to keep the dancer out of the trial; this money is got by her staying on with the show and contracting to put her head in the lion's mouth, an act which brings a party of swells behind the scenes, and with them a rich young man who succumbs. Retirement and diamonds, his engagement with the society girl broken. His lawyer friend, coming to remonstrate, falls in love with the universally seductive; their happiness and luxury, plus the near wedding, are wrecked by the scheme of the pickpocket, just out of jail, and circus manager, who wants her back in the show. The rich lover finds the pickpocket in the lady's room, all is over. She brings a breach-of-promise suit, not for the money either. At the trial she herself handles the witnesses brought against her past life. In the end, after the judge and some of the jurors are heavily attentive, the lover comes, the check is torn up, life starts over again, safe, rich, ardent.

The themes of this West play have as many levels as Dante's hell; among them at the bottom, I suppose, is "You can be had," then, "Give me a break, will you," "You'll get yours," and at the top, "Darling, have some diamonds," which, it would seem, proves the other three. Clearly this is a piece at least complete in itself, which is more than you can say of many an aspiring project in drama. A certain rich banality hovers over its conclusion that is, I think, no more banal than the conclusions in diverse pseudo-Ibsen-Shaw-psychological-sociological serious plays, of which we have had many. For heroine and hero, the good Molière, with his

Le bonheur de savoir que vous êtes aimé

and

Et c'est pour mes péchés que je vous aime ainsi,

has left concluding texts.

When you come to speak of an actor, or of any artist in any art, there are two aspects of his total sum that are to be considered: his conceptions, or ideas; and his technical achievement.

Miss West's conceptions, as I have seen them at any rate, in two plays of hers, "Sex" and "Diamond Lil," and the two pictures, "She Done Him Wrong" and "I'm No Angel," are such as move along established lines. These lines have been greatly chopped up since the days when feminism began and the male was deposed from his place—which in America, what with a busy day in the office, he was already too tired to occupy. It is to be noted, at this point, that in backward countries like Italy, Spain or France, and in benighted institutions like the Catholic Church, Nora leaving her doll's house was never taken quite at par. Certain antiquated points of view manifest a persuasion that marriage is a contract and that leaving home and children to go out and realize yourself is matter for debate, even though it spoils the last act in a play. However that may be, one has only to read the New York papers, which are neither backward nor Catholic, to know that leaving home is far less gloomy than of old and that husbands sometimes make dolls out of others besides their wives, who, if they kept a skin you love to touch, could prolong what Ibsen's Nora morally refuses to accept. It is all very confusing to a mere critic. The best I can do about it is to say that the Mae West conceptions, as expressed in these plays, are something like this: woman, seductive creature and hips; men avid and easy game; the shady lady has after all a good heart, and once you "treat her right," and arouse her passions for limousines, diamonds and true love, she's a straight fellow and cuts out all the unworthy trash she has known (quite well). She ultimately has kept out of jail, and he kept out of a Park Avenue marriage, and there are fidelity, diamonds, passion and proficiency to follow. The final assurance is that with a good fellow, man or woman, this bond will hold forever, a theme not without its wisdom and solidity, since people do not always learn each other best through psychological

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logarithms. This is all matter that nature and Miss West have instituted and that I cannot decide. I may say that in climates where the sun shines hot and bright Miss West's theses make a simpler pattern. There is no doubt that seeing Man and Woman in capital letters is curiously clarifying, or that Browningesque, analytical feminine egotisms and subtle and scientific, subsidized masculinities lead to exhaustive research for which, however worth while the effort, the dramatic medium is harder to consolidate.

Technically Mae West is remarkable. Some of our actors flounder through what they do not understand; some understand, but, technically, cannot render. She keeps absolutely within her conceptions, and never misses the rendering of them. Her time sense is unequaled on our stage; and time means much in all acting. Her cue sense is equaled only by Miss Lynn Fontanne, who employed it, alas, this past season in assisting at a play, "Design for Living," which the very taking of it seriously reduced to its proper triviality. In "I'm No Angel," the scene with the four Negro women, their mistress served among them, like a goddess and her maidens in some myth or vivid story, is astonishingly beautiful. It swims in good humor and perfect rhythm, and the play of the one voice in among the other four is, as theatre, quite dazzling.

Miss West is not beautiful; she is not seductive. This is the greatest luck for us. She acts being beautiful, she acts seduction. She is not, to my mind, obscene. Many actresses in the moving pictures, when they sit on knees, embrace or kiss, manifest a revolting abandon of all reticence; all we get is filthy egotism and the ramifications of a half-covered exhibitionism, too private or immediate to be art and too special to be of interest save as you happen to feel their personalities. Miss West's audiences sense this; I have noted how they watch her in those ardent scenes with a smile of delight. What they really are beaming at is the wit about the moment acted and the luster of acting as distinguished from heavy yearning. Whatever vanity she may have, even, is objectified and right. She is a confirmation of health in acting as distinguished from fervor, satisfied exhibition, itch or exploited, rank emotion too personal to the actor. It is a shame how for the sum of this swagger, projection and precision of Mae West's we can exchange the most solemn elevations of most of our great actresses, disregarding it all as matter without accuracy, delight or contagion. Better stuff in the same kind than most of such acting affords can be found elsewhere, in other arts, in poetry or music, for instance. Miss West exists in acting.

Mae West, next to Charlie Chaplin, is the best actor in Hollywood. And this leads on to the fact that she has no reality at all, not in the usual sense. Mr. Chaplin has created this Charlie of his—the Charlot of all Europe—into which he has poured his meaning about life. Miss West has created a sort of Lillian Russell-gay-nineties-bad-good-diamond-girl myth or figure, heightened and typified, that is becoming as distinct as Charlie. If she keeps it up a few years longer it will be only a character, like Harlequin or Columbina in the old *commedia dell' arte*—that soundest of all acting bases. It will be complete in itself, diamonds not earth, motif not reality, all free to be theatre, and, whatever the ideas generalized, entirely expressive. This is not so much a question of whether what she does is conscious or unconscious; but rather the completeness and perfection of it. To think of "I'm No Angel" makes you smile; to think of most theatre events makes you insist. With her you know what you know, amid all that strange swell of theatre and life. With most players you know what you think. With her the wickedness, sex and virtuous reward have their fingers crossed; the technique is an angel with his tongue in his cheek.

STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Shelley Unbound

SIR: This is just a word or two in reply to Mr. Young's commentary on my Shelley essay. First of all, I think it is clear that neither of us is a member of a debating society: Mr. Young is a dramatic critic and novelist and I am a poet. Second, Mr. Young read my essay hastily and with some heat, and in noting a glaring, mechanical error (the substitution of Sophocles for Aeschylus) became angry and thought he had discovered an important point of attack. Let me assure him that I need go no further than the first draft of my essay to discover the mistake, and that others who have read "Prometheus Unbound" will know that I was thinking of Aeschylus by reference to Shelley's introduction. Let me remind him that the error is exactly on the same plane as his confusion of Marathon and Thermopylae, or his statement that St. Francis came out of a monastery. Third, I think it is clear, without going into detail, that Mr. Young's commentary was of the sort I protested against in my essay, and that my "straw man" is a living creature.

It is significant, I think, that Mr. Young's best paragraphs deal with "form," and that he has attempted to ignore or misread my content. His is an example of the sort of criticism that Wilson and Lockhart delivered against Shelley and, in speaking of Shelley, Mr. Young uses many of the same devices—note his refusal to differentiate between ritual and religion. Note again that Mr. Young presents a minor lyric poet, the "tearful" Simonides, in Greek, to compare with Shelley! The lines he quotes are fit comparison to the war sonnets of Rupert Brooke, and cannot stand the test of a higher criterion. This, I think, brings us back to the real issue raised by my essay—that a blindness to moral or ethical values will, in time, seriously deflect esthetic judgment. Let me repeat:

> In these times the alternatives to Shelley's position are outlined in the second section of my essay. If literary history has the power to repeat itself, our neo-classic revival will encourage the signs of moral exhaustion and decay that have already appeared upon the surface of contemporary poetry. Too soon we are discovering . . . that technical facility (by no means to be despised) is but a part of a poet's responsibility to his audience—that poetry's preoccupation with itself as a separate art from the main stream of literature might well grow into a symptom of sterility, more dangerous today than the counter-dangers often observed in current criticism.

Long Island City, N. Y. HORACE GREGORY.

[N.B.—Simonides' poem served me to exemplify the proper meaning of "revolutionary" applied to poetry. It served also as a comment on the "tyranny of the past" motif. In no place did I "present" Simonides "to compare with Shelley."

About the "St. Francis came out of a monastery," meaning, obviously, out of monasticism, I may say that I lived once five months, in Tuscany, next door to a Franciscan monastery, and later in Assisi. I know, in his own Italian, not in softish versions of them, St. Francis' "Laudes Creaturarum" and "I Fioretti," plus the biographies, among them the usual Sabatier, which so forwarded the sentimental cult of the saint and blurred the Catholic values. Every average (especially tourist) reader knows—which was why I chose him for an example—St. Francis' story, from youthful sins to founding that order out of whose monasteries he

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came to us. Without monasticism St. Francis would be inconceivable. One can, of course, however, deny anything in monasticism that does not fit one's monastic argument, and so come out at the same door with the "tyranny of the past," "ritual," "freedom," etc., set of themes. In Shelley's work some of these vivid, vague, semi-musical concepts, luminous energies, redoubled half-insights of his are, combined with the genius, one thing; but taken as terms used argumentatively, with presumptions of cogency, they are quite another. Basically they are none too far from "Smile week," or "Make America prune-conscious."

Mr. Gregory's judgment of Simonides'—in Greek—poem needs only the check-up of a single item: his acceptance of "tearful" as a translation of the Greek epithet for Simonides. In Simonides' part of the world from the sixth century B. C. down to the fourteenth century A. D., not only was his terseness, simplicity, elevation and energy admired; it was considered that among all writers of epigram, pathos was the peculiar gift in which he excelled. In Greek monumental sculpture you can easily see that grave, still grief, final and deathless, that they termed "pathetic." Imagine the Orpheus, Eurydice and Hermes relief as "tearful." "Minor poet"—Simonides, living in, of all Greek epochs, the one most full of glory and events (the Persian invasion, for instance), was then considered the greatest poet of Greece, both as the national voice and as artist, even above Pindar. As to the "blindness to moral and ethical values" that will "seriously deflect esthetic judgment," to such an extent as not to see the "fit comparison," nothing higher, with Rupert Brooke, it is clear that, even in so brief a poem, by means of the tone, firmness, word order, etc., there is evident the moral, philosophical and critical content in Simonides which the Greeks so valued.

There are many alternatives to Shelley's position besides those Mr. Gregory "outlined." Since the term "neo-classic" has so often had connotations "of signs of moral exhaustion and decay," we might almost as well say these roundheads show signs of spherical skulls. The discovery about technical facility is not too soon, but an ancient platitude. It is true, however, that some people have already discovered how little is behind metrical thousands of words printed among us. In many epochs the main stream of literature has been poetic. In an epoch otherwise, much will depend on whether the main stream is expressive of the epoch's life, or not expressive, in which case "main" implies only bulk. It is, of course, if not sonorous at least obvious, any way you take it, that every school or theory in art, like every civilization, has its special symptom, carries within it the seed of its own kind of decay. Poetry of one sort may decay to sterile dust, of another sort to hysterical chaos. Which is more dangerous today would be hard to decide.—S. Y.]

The New Deal as Education

SIR: In "N.R.A. Notes" of October 27, 1933, a publication of the Labor Research Association, there is a reference to my article in The New Republic of October 18, "Roosevelt Confronts Capitalism," which misrepresents my attitude toward the whole subject. Since misrepresentation of this sort on the part of Communists and near-Communists is frequent, it is worth while to correct it, not for purposes of self-defense, but in order that the ideas in question may be understood.

This publication says, "Even the 'economic planners' have grown disillusioned. They first hailed the N.R.A. with great acclaim as a new way to keep workers from seeking a revolutionary way out of the crisis. They painted it as leading to a new 'planned' system within the old capitalist framework. George Soule, one of the leading 'planners' . . . complains," etc.

1. "Economic planners" can scarcely be lumped together, since they extend all the way from the leaders of the Soviet Union on the left to the president of the United States Chamber of Commerce and Mussolini on the right.

2. I never hailed the N.R.A. with great acclaim, nor has The New Republic done so. From the first it has maintained a critical attitude, praising certain good features, condemning bad, and seeking to place the thing in a historical perspective. My first article on the subject (July 5) ended with the statement, "What we have created is not a reformed industrial system, but a mixture in which problems will be precipitated with greater clarity, an arena in which sides may be chosen and significant conflicts waged." An editorial the following week, "Capitalism Enters the Operating Room," made the point that the establishment of industrial government was a precursor of "a significant struggle for power," the results of which would decide whether the contradictions of capitalism could be resolved and whether it would live or die.

3. If I had hailed the N.R.A., I should never have done so as a way to keep workers from seeking a revolutionary way out of the crisis. That would have been silly. Unfortunately, the workers did not have to be kept from such action; the utmost efforts of Communists and others seemed unable to create a revolutionary movement of the slightest importance among American workers. I have looked with some favor on the labor sections of the law, because these have helped indirectly to strengthen the labor movement, which, before the N.R.A., was weak numerically and hopelessly abject.

4. Neither in discussing the N.R.A. nor in any previous discussion of planning have I predicted a successfully "planned" system within the old capitalist framework. Rather I have looked upon the movement toward planning as one which would educate people, through experience, to the necessity of breaking the old capitalist framework and substituting something much better.

I am not disillusioned about the N.R.A., because I never cherished any illusions about it. So far, it seems to have gone far in producing exactly the results which I anticipated.

New York City. GEORGE SOULE.

Extracts from Letters

THE third annual Seminar in the Caribbean will be held this year in Cuba, from March 7 to March 14, under the auspices, as usual, of the Committee on Cultural Relations with Latin America. The program in Cuba will include round-table discussions, lectures and field trips into the interior. Among the faculty will be Dr. Ernest Gruening, Miss Elizabeth Wallace, Dr. Chester Lloyd Jones and Mr. Hubert C. Herring, secretary of the Committee. Any of our readers interested in the seminar may reach the secretary at 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City.

Robert C. Berry, president of the Brotherhood of Edison Employees of New York City, writes in to inform us that his organization has just obtained the first federal injunction ever issued in behalf of employees under the N.R.A. This injunction restrains the New York Edison Company from suppressing organized labor unions or setting up company unions. Mr. Berry states that there has been a considerable drain on the organization's treasury, which is supported by monthly dues of fifty cents. He appeals to our readers for help and is attempting to organize one hundred supporters who will pay five dollars a month toward the work of the brotherhood. The address is 21 West Forty-fifth Street, New York City.

Agnes E. Howe, of San Jose, California, writes in to say that Ella Winter made an error in her account of the Sunnyvale pickers' strike. According to the correspondent, Pat Callahan, one of the leaders of the strike, did receive medical attention while in jail, although Miss Winter reported that he had been refused it.

William Beedie, organizer for the Radio Factory Workers' Union, which is carrying on a strike in the Cornell-Dubilier condenser factory, appeals to our readers for moral and financial support. Contributions may be mailed to the offices of the union at 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City.

S. Greenblatt, secretary of the Film and Photo League, writes to say that the exhibition announced in these columns has been moved to 116 Lexington Avenue, New York City.

M. G. Merriam, editor of The Frontier, a regional magazine of the Far Northwest, writes in to say that his magazine and The Midland will hereafter be published jointly. The renewed venture will now be a magazine of the West. Mr. Merriam, who will publish The Frontier and Midland from Missoula, Montana, wishes to hear from anyone interested in the magazine.

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Homesteads, Inc.

MR. RALPH BORSODI is at the same time an excellent guide and a dangerous messiah.

There are thousands of middle-class families that want to escape from industrial ugliness and insecurity and build themselves new lives close to nature. For such families, Mr. Borsodi is likely to prove an excellent guide. Provided they have some capital (it needn't be large)—provided the family includes one breadwinner sure of his job (it needn't be a very good one)—provided the wife has a talent for efficient housekeeping (which needn't amount to sheer genius like Mrs. Borsodi's)—provided mother and father and children all have a gift for living next to the soil and are willing to undergo hardships in the early years—then they can safely take Mr. Borsodi's advice.

Others, too, can take his advice if suitable facilities are present. Unemployed and half-employed clerks and mechanics can form themselves into communities, move into the far suburbs and, if anyone advances sufficient capital, can build their own houses and raise most of their own food. Near Dayton, Ohio, Mr. Borsodi has helped to found a Homestead Unit of thirty-five families. If the first unit succeeds—and I think its success depends on whether the thirty-five families can find a small but dependable source of outside income—new units will be established. Their influence may indirectly serve to raise living standards in many other communities.

But Mr. Borsodi isn't satisfied with being a guide to the middle class or an adviser to certain groups of the underprivileged. In his new book, "Flight from the City,"[1] he proposes to solve the whole problem of unemployment and insecurity in modern life—and to solve it, moreover, without labor unions, higher wages for the poor and higher taxes for the rich, without the public ownership of a single factory. His proposal will therefore seem especially attractive to those who fear public ownership and higher taxes. The trouble is that instead of solving the problem it might end by making society even more insecure than it is now. That is why Mr. Borsodi is a dangerous messiah.

He belongs to the class of those who might be called push-button prophets. They look at the world and find it full of injustice, and want to remedy the injustice, but without really disturbing anybody. They think that if one switch could be thrown, one button pushed in a row of buttons, one tonic administered from a shelf of tonics, then everything would be vastly improved. For some the proper button is Currency, for others Credit, for others Taxation, for still others Hours of Labor; for Hitler it is the Jews. Each prophet believes in the perfect efficacy of his own button. Thus, Mr. Borsodi broadly condemns "the futile process of trying to produce prosperity by creating new industries, expanding credit, cheapening money, spreading work, shortening hours of labor or establishing unemployment insurance." He attacks social planning and all other means of protecting society from the effects of what he is satisfied to call "that mysterious phenomenon known as the business cycle." He speaks with contempt and hatred of everything done in Russia. Instead he offers his own simple path for reaching Utopia without political action or civil turmoil.

Unemployment, to Mr. Borsodi, is an elementary problem to be solved by elementary means. John Doe and Jane Doe are no longer working. They no longer receive, on Saturdays, a pay envelope containing enough money to provide for their weekly needs. Charity will destroy their self-respect (and Mr. Borsodi regards unemployment insurance as a form of charity). The public control of industry won't give them back their jobs and will, in Mr. Borsodi's opinion, render our economic life even more insecure than private control has rendered it. What then should be done? Why, the answer is simple—let John Doe and his wife produce their own food, clothing and shelter. If they haven't enough capital to build themselves a home in the country, let money be loaned them by the state—they can earn enough in their spare time to repay it, with interest. By this method, "we should not only relieve them temporarily. If we did it on a sufficiently large scale, we should end the problem of unemployment for the whole country and end it permanently."

We should do nothing of the sort. No matter how large the scale on which Mr. Borsodi's proposal was adopted, it could not fulfill his promises to the unemployed. It could not make them self-sustaining or really secure. Even if millions of them raised all their own food, wove all their cloth on hand looms, owned their houses free of mortgage and provided their own amusements—even then, unless they sank to the level of serfs in medieval Europe, they would still be dependent on society, they would still have needs which only the outside world could supply.

First of all, under Mr. Borsodi's scheme, they would need pumps, piping, electric cable, concrete mixers, band saws, pressure kettles, all sorts of mechanical equipment to lighten their domestic burdens. In order to buy this equipment, they would need cheap and abundant credit. In order to operate it, they would need electric power at a reasonable price. They would need medical service and hospitals staffed by trained physicians. They would need education for their children, beyond the rudiments that could be taught at home. They would need good roads maintained by the state. They would need to pay taxes—road taxes, school taxes, miscellaneous taxes to prevent floods and forest fires, drain malarial marshes, maintain hospitals, universities and libraries. Unless they paid them, public revenues would dwindle away and most of these services would have to be abandoned.

In other words, Mr. Borsodi's followers would require money. The less of it they required, the more urgently would they require it. No matter how much they produced for themselves, the subsistence farmers would also need a cash crop—they would have to sell something, whether it was wheat, beef cattle or their own brawn. The price for which the cash crop was sold would depend on the economic condition of the nation as a whole. If that condition became any more unsound than at present, the subsistence farmers would receive so little, they would have to work such long hours producing their cash crop of grain or industrial commodities, that either they would be reduced to serfdom or else their subsistence homesteads would be sold for taxes. In any case, their fate would continue to depend on the "consequences of that mysterious phenomenon known as the business cycle."

This suggests the answer to the correspondent who asked Mr. Borsodi whether his plans could be made continuously operative—"I mean, can a community organized on your principles not only afford a sane, healthful existence to its

[1] Flight from the City, by Ralph Borsodi. New York: Harper and Brothers. 209 pages. $2.50.

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members, but also, as long as a capitalistic organization of society endures, a modest and constant increment of usable wealth in the form of money, to give access to the world and its goods outside the community, to provide insurance against age and casualty, and to provide some inheritance for the next generation?" It can, but only so long as capitalism endures in a more or less healthy condition.

Mr. Borsodi is betting on capitalism—but at the same time he is trying to sponge his own horse. If I were to write him in turn, I should speak somewhat as follows:

"You are betting on industrial capitalism to provide cheap machinery, abundant credit, low taxes, good markets, jobs at fair wages—everything your followers need to make their homesteads successful. But at the same time, you are urging a course of action which is calculated to cripple industrial capitalism and absolutely prevent it from furnishing these essentials.

"Let us consider the implications of your proposal, as stated by yourself. You say: 'If enough families were to make their homes economically productive, cash-crop farmers specializing in one crop would have to abandon farming as a business and go back to it as a way of life.' That is all very well for the farmers themselves. But this country contains millions of acres—especially in the wheat belt of the Great Plains and in the irrigated regions of the Southwest—that are good for nothing except one-crop farming. Much of this land is mortgaged to banks or insurance companies. If it were all abandoned, the banks would crash, the insurance companies cease payments—then where would be the cheap credit which subsistence homesteads require?

"You say: 'Food is our most important industry. A war of attrition, such as we have been carrying on all alone, if extended on a large enough scale, would put the food industry out of its misery.' And you say: 'The textile and clothing industries, with their low wages, seasonal unemployment, cheap and shoddy products, would shrink to the production of those fabrics and those garments which it is impractical for the average family to produce for itself.' You seem to think that these three great industries—food, textiles, garments—would die cleanly, shrink away to white dry bones like a thirsty man in the desert. But industries don't die in that fashion. They thresh about, involve thousands in their ruin, infect the whole country with the smell of their corpses. Incidentally, by contracting the market, their death would make it impossible for other industries—'those which would be desirable and essential because they would be making tools and machines, electric-light bulbs, iron and copper pipe, wire of all kinds'—to produce these necessities at the low price which subsistence farmers would be able to pay.

"It is a bleak prospect which you are holding out. Of course it is more than possible that such industrial disasters would goad the workers to the point of taking over all factories and operating them for the common good. In this case alone there would be some hope that, indirectly, your proposal 'would release men and women from their present thralldom to the factory and make them masters of machines instead of servants to them'—that it 'would end the power of exploiting them which ruthless, acquisitive and predatory men now possess' and 'free them for the conquest of comfort, beauty and understanding.' These ends of yours, Mr. Borsodi, are the good ends which all of us desire; the bloodiest revolution of modern times was fought to achieve them. They will never be reached merely by moving to the country and canning spinach."

MALCOLM COWLEY.

Comedy of Treason

Divided Loyalties: Americans in England During the Warr for Independence, by Lewis Einstein. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 485 pages. $3.50.

IN THE opera bouffe that Mr. Einstein skillfully reconstructs for us, we recognize the eighteenth century as intimately as in a Mozart minuet or a Hogarth print or a volume of the French Encyclopedia. The thesis—if so academic a word can be used—of Mr. Einstein's book is that many Americans of the revolutionary era, divided in their loyalties between their native land and their mother country, managed to serve both, or to maintain an exalted neutrality, with considerable success. Loyalty is perhaps too strong a term to apply to the Bancrofts, Thompsons and Wentworths, the Copleys, Stuarts and Wests, who flit cheerfully across Mr. Einstein's pages, for these men were not so much divided in their loyalty as they were innocent of the sentiment. And while, to a generation that has experienced to the fullest the blessings of Nationalism and has erected loyalty into a philosophical first principle, this may seem profoundly immoral, it was nevertheless far more characteristic of the Georgian age than was violent partisanship. To the tolerant and easygoing Englishmen of the eighteenth century, there was something slightly vulgar about the fierce patriotism of the followers of the Adamses. One cannot but suspect that the English were more shocked at the bad taste of the rebels than at their treason.

One by one Mr. Einstein leads forth his actors in the comedy of divided loyalties, and those who mistake their role for heavy tragedy get little sympathy. We are introduced to as charming a group of spies and informers as ever deceived upright men: the philosophic Dr. Bancroft, in the pay of the King, who was adviser to the American Commissioners and the French Court and misled poor Silas Deane and even shrewd Benjamin Franklin; the Reverend John Vardill, who piously betrayed the American cause in return for the Regius Professorship of Divinity at Kings College; the amusing blackguard Captain Hynson, who persuaded Deane to trust him with all the dispatches for Congress and stole them for his British masters. We meet a more serious-minded group—Americans who were animated by a genuine love for their mother country and by a fully justified fear of the leveling tendencies of the rebels, and who fled from Democracy rather than from Independence. Chief among these was the upright Governor Hutchinson, historian of Massachusetts, who served his people well and was cruelly rewarded by them. A third group, and not the least interesting, consists of artists to whom the war was but an irritating interruption to their professional careers. Mr. Einstein draws these with particular skill—Benjamin West, godly, generous and vain, who achieved affluence, renown and the friendship of his sovereign; Copley, a greater artist and a lesser man than his benefactor West; Jonathan Trumbull, who had the audacity to resign from the rebel army in the midst of the war and settle in London to paint scenes glorifying American victories. In a very special category is the fabulous Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, a delightful blend of Diderot, Casanova and Struensee, who symbolized the survival of the eighteenth-century tolerance by living in Paris during the Napoleonic Wars, drawing pay as a colonel in the British army and a pension as a Count of Bavaria. And always, hovering in the background, there is the pathetic figure of George III, as human as Mr. Soglow's Little King, passionately curious, endlessly industrious, ap-

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pealingly generous and tolerant, anxious to be Royal and do Right.

Mr. Einstein is at his best in the chapters on Count Rumford and Benjamin West: here his style has something of the vivacity of Guedalla without his studied obscurity; elsewhere it is decidedly pedestrian. Despite the charm and even the frivolity of its subject, Mr. Einstein's book is a work of substance and merit, built largely on documentary sources, accurate, impartial and intelligent. It presents no full-length portraits, no well developed interpretation, no mass of new material, but it reveals by indirection rather than by argument an intellectual atmosphere in which there were tolerance, magnanimity, humor, elegance and immoral charm, and a cultivated respect for individuality. Mr. Einstein does not say that the dearth of these qualities in American society can be partially explained by the violence and ruthlessness of the American Revolution.

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER.

Eight Novels

Front Porch, by Reginald Wright Kauffman. New York: The Macaulay Company. $2.

The Flutter of an Eyelid, by Myron Brinig. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.

I, the Tiger, by Manuel Komroff. New York: Coward McCann. $2.

Cash Item, by Catharine Brody. New York: Longmans, Green and Company. $2.

The Tide, by Vincent Sheean. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. $2.

Women in the Sun, by Benedict Thielen. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.

The Young and Evil, by Charles Ford and Parker Tyler. Paris: The Obelisk Press. 50 fr.

The Woods Colt, by Thames Williamson. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.

THESE eight American novels have about the same relationship to one another as the various acts in a vaudeville show. Each has something a little different to offer, yet almost all have much the same audience in mind. Each tries to be something that will steal the show, yet most of them are distinctly routine acts. Like vaudeville numbers, too, these novels are time-and-place conscious; their "allusions" are local on the one hand and topical on the other.

What they have chiefly in common is lack of breadth. Most of these authors, while pretending to throw up much earth, have dug very narrow holes; one has studied a Pennsylvania town, another an arty colony of Californians, a third a small city bank; and each novelist gives the impression that the world stops where he has stopped. Each has written from notes, none from experience in the wide and valuable sense of the word. As a result, these compact little studies are only on their way to becoming real novels; what plots they possess have simply been superimposed on piles of facts. There is never a sense of broad human interaction.

These novels come so far, but no farther, under a common head. Two of them are, in a passing sense, good books; three are middling; three are bad. "Front Porch" is bad because, while readable enough, its picture of generations and traditions clashing in a Pennsylvania town is wholly on the surface and some of the time not even convincing superficially. Mr. Kauffman's elderly aristocrat, the hero of the story, is a stock Kentucky colonel transplanted to Pennsylvania. "The Flutter of an Eyelid" is bad because it is all vulgar virtuosity: if Mr. Brinig meant to satirize his sex-drunk and art-drunk characters, as he must have meant, he failed; for he himself toppled plump into the midst of them. He provides no feeling of being apart from what he writes about; his whole book is lush, feverish, pretentious. Mr. Komroff's "I, the Tiger" is scarcely better. Intended as a skeptical survey, from without, of humanity, it is actually a mass of sententious platitudes put into the mouth of the tiger who tells it. Nowhere in the book does Mr. Komroff reveal any great insight into either animal psychology or human action. He is a good enough story-teller to make reading the book no hardship; but his hero is as puerile a symbol as he is preposterous a beast.

"Cash Item" belongs with the middling novels. It has the virtues of sincerity, surface reality and an interest in contemporary society; but it is entirely journalistic, and much of its journalism is bungled. Miss Brody learned a good deal about banks by working in one; what she learned she transcribed; some of what she transcribed is pointless and some of what she should have transcribed she presumably never learned. At any rate the plot gets in the way of the bank and the bank of the plot; the result, by any serious standard, is a mess. The same journalistic cancer has gnawed at the vitals of Mr. Sheean's "The Tide," a freshly written and fast-moving tale about a sincere mystic whom America first hailed as a messiah and then booed as a fake. Against the mystic is counterpoised life in a newspaper office, but without any satiric rewards or artistic integration. The book ultimately emerges as very good reading matter, but nothing better. It could have been. So too, I think, could "Women in the Sun," which reads very well and offers some of the best natural dialogue I have encountered in a long time. But the theme—the old theme of turning a good woman into a bad one and a bad one into a good—is handled in an arbitrary and unconvincing way; the two heroines are such flops in their original roles that one could hardly have supposed they would seem truer to life when the roles were reversed.

The two good books in this batch have merits of an extremely diverse sort. "The Young and Evil" is not remarkable as literature, but it is the first gloves-off account, so far as I know, of the lives of more or less professional young homosexuals. The boys in this story—calculating, cynical, hard-boiled, aimless and shiftless—with their shrill bickerings, their petty plots, their wit, their alternating frights and insolences, are usually convincing; and the world they move in has the same trait of reality. Even among homosexuals, they would seem to be very special cases. Yet in spite of this, and of some experimental writing which falls flat, and of too little sense of progression, the book is good: it is both authentic and alive.

Mr. Thames Williamson has written, in "The Woods Colt," a regional novel that sometimes has power, oftener tang, and always a feeling for drama and unity. It is a very good job. That may be ambiguous praise but it is exactly the right praise. There is nothing in the book to illuminate, on a large scale, human life; nothing among its homely materials takes larger, more heroic shape; it is just a good folk novel where the characters chiefly interest us, not of themselves, but because they are molded by a special way of life and, in their actions and decisions, mirror it. Clint Morgan, the "woods colt," starts off by getting into a little harmless trouble. In a less primitive community than the Ozarks he would probably take his medicine and profit by his mistake; but upbringing, environment, the rules of his particular game, insist on a different and more violent course of action, and in trying to extricate himself

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from a little trouble he brews so much more that he is finally killed. For all his anarchic lawlessness there is little free will in Clint: his destiny is decided by the world he lives in and the code of those he lives among. So it is they and not Clint who chiefly interest us, and they do this thoroughly. Mr. Williamson tells his story well, giving life and flavor to the Ozark dialect and a simple, organic pattern to a tale that never wavers but continues straight and dramatic to the end. LOUIS KRONENBERGER.

The Instinct to Conform

Homecoming, by Floyd Dell. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 379 pages. $3.

A LARGE part of the work of Floyd Dell, including most of this autobiography, is amazingly intelligent and much of it is fine and sensitive. It is doubtful if any other writer has covered so expertly and broadly the mental world of the "intellectuals" of our time, and as a result the autobiography is constantly entertaining, the pages full of half and quarter-thoughts, perceptions, complex mental reactions and points of view. It is readable, surprisingly lucid and, particularly in the opening chapters, which deal with his childhood and family, rich in concrete detail presented with literary art. Yet, as in Floyd Dell's early work, there seems no personality behind his writing; the problems of his life, however vividly and entertainingly told, are reflections from the mental life of his environment.

I was introduced to Floyd Dell's work by his book reviews published in the old Masses. The first one read seemed a perfectly live and vivid critical reaction, but the second did not add anything to the first, nor the third to the first and second. I remember reading them with progressive disappointment, for no matter how intelligent they were, there seemed no resulting *mass* of unconsciously living material which thereafter had to be reckoned with in the life of the reader. Likewise in the autobiography it is the life of the "intellectuals" rather than the life of the intellect that is rendered.

The book has a surprising form for an autobiography; it clearly shows the author's development, even the development of his mental life, with none of the vague fringes of doubt that inhere in complex reality. It is all so logical, it has such clearly defined stages in the progress towards Marriage and the Home, that it almost seems as though the end were determined upon from the beginning. I remember the surprise some of us felt when Floyd made a handspring from bohemianism to marriage almost overnight, as if there were no resistance, as indeed there are no resistances in mere thinking. The book portrays rather the thought that comes from literature than the thought that comes from life.

There is unmistakable value in some of his appreciations, such as his tribute to the poetry of Edna Millay, and in his account of his successful effort, as a boy, to change his philosophy to socialism, one reason being that he might thereby keep the ideal of his father intact. He felt that otherwise he would have to despise a man who couldn't support his family. Thus, from the conventionalities of the bourgeoisie Floyd turned to socialist conventionalities. In the present story this law-abidingness sometimes leads to painful injustice, as notably in the many passages about George Cram Cook. Dell apparently could not do justice to Cook because he regarded him as a failure. He thought that Cook was a failure because he hadn't written any successful books and also because Cook himself felt that he had failed. But Cook produced the Provincetown Players, an organization which made a real contribution to American life; nor was this his only achievement. Those who had the privilege of knowing him well realized that Cook possessed not only an original temperament, but one which expressed itself in many ways and contributed to the success of many careers. Only a truly great book could have influenced as many lives as did Cook's remarkable personality.

Although it is true that Jig Cook felt himself a failure, it was not because his books were unsuccessful: he felt the inevitable disappointment of not being able to realize his visions. One is surprised to find this apostle of independence condemning Cook for his failure to meet those conventions of the middle classes against which Dell himself is always tilting. The truth is that whether Floyd Dell is emerging from capitalistic standards into socialism and bohemianism, or retreating into monogamy and rigid rules of virtue and success, the mainspring seems always to be the instinct to conform. HUTCHINS HAPGOOD.

Accounts Payable

The Internal Debts of the United States, edited by Evans Clark. New York: Published for the Twentieth Century Fund by the Macmillan Company. 426 pages. $4.50.

THIS STUDY of the internal debts of the United States was made by nine investigators. Each investigator wrote a specialized chapter in which he confined himself to a single category of indebtedness (farm-mortgage debts, public-utility debts, the debts of banks, etc.) and assumed exclusive responsibility for the findings and recommendations at which he arrived. In the first chapter Mr. Clark summarizes the facts and the analyses contained in the later, specialized, chapters. At the close of the book is a set of general recommendations in which almost all of the nine authors concurred.

Perhaps it is inevitable that a study such as this one should seem more adequate as fact-finding than as interpretation. Facts are at least tangible, while interpretation necessarily rests on many tacit assumptions. The Twentieth Century Fund has performed a service of great value in finding out the amount of each general category of debt existing in the United States at the present time. A reviewer cannot certify the complete accuracy of a mass of data such as is contained in this book. The most that he can do is to satisfy himself concerning the methods used in assembling and arranging the data. In this regard it must be flatly stated that anyone who wishes to know the facts of internal indebtedness in the United States must read this book.

In interpreting the debt situation the authors appear, in general, to be more complacent than their own facts would warrant. Thus Mr. Clark, in his introductory chapter, is led to say, ". . . the nation's internal debts are also the nation's credits. Every promise of an American to pay is an assurance that another American is to receive payment." This is rather like saying that there are two sides to a coin: the statement is true, but its significance is quite limited. That debts, as such, are innocuous is argued explicitly by Dr. Franklin W. Ryan in his chapter on "Short-Term Personal Debts." He says:

> There is nothing fundamentally wrong with either the open-charge account system or with instalment buying. . . . This American system of getting into debt,

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> like all economic situations, contains its own remedies and correctives. If a retailer overextends credit too freely, he will pay a penalty for it. But if his creditors [sic] are gained wisely, his net profits will increase.

This is making platitudes out of error. In the year 1933, it should be clear that a great deal is "fundamentally wrong with instalment buying" and also with other forms of indebtedness.

To treat indebtedness as if it were a problem unto itself, to regard the solvency of debtors as the *sine qua non* of the economic system, to propose policies which aim at the increase of indebtedness rather than its diminution, is to take too narrow a view of the question. Debt has systematic implications which spread throughout the economic structure, with consequences to employment, wages, business earnings, purchasing power and prices. The present study lacks the kind of theoretical device which modern physicists call a "frame of reference," the use of which enables an investigator to consider at once a whole system of relationships. Such devices are not unknown to economists. One was used, with special reference to indebtedness, in Thorstein Veblen's "Theory of Business Enterprise"—which was published just thirty years ago. HORACE TAYLOR.

Psychology: The Social Bias

Seven Psychologies, by Edna Heidbreder. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 450 pages. $3.

ALTHOUGH psychology is the most popular of the "popular sciences," being called upon to do all sorts of things—help educate the young, win wars, organize business, consummate successful marriages and spread the word of God—judged by the rigorous test of scientific method it has not yet won standing comparable to other natural sciences. Indeed, the very title of Miss Heidbreder's book contains an implicit challenge to the critical reader. After all, the subject matter of psychology is ultimately one—man in his workday behavior, conscious and unconscious, reflective and unreflective. Why, then, seven different systems of psychology, each claiming exclusive mastery of the field? Whoever heard of seven different systems of biology or chemistry?

Offhand one would be tempted to observe that since there are many facets to the human psyche, systems of psychology differ only in their selection of the phase of human experience which they regard as central, and that consequently, despite their denials of one another's insights, they do not contradict but complement one another. Or one might suspect that these seven systems of psychology differ merely in their conflicting linguistic descriptions of the same set of observable relationships. They would then all be saying the same thing in different words. Unfortunately the peace cannot be kept by such easy methodological devices. The psychological explanations of the simplest act—say licking a burnt finger—are so disparate that they cannot be reduced to the same terms. To one school it is a direct motor response to a specific stimulus, to another it is the protective activity of "the organism as a whole" comparable to the behavior of animals in nursing a wound, to a third it is a reversion to infantile sexuality, to a fourth it follows from an insight into the cooling effects of moisture.

The author of this book is not unaware of the problem which her title suggests; and if she does not present a satisfactory solution, she nevertheless offers a competent survey, larded with high-spirited critical commentary, of the major

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schools of American psychology. Her fluent exposition reveals an obvious mastery of the materials, while her sensitiveness to problems of method betrays a philosophic interest which, in the eyes of the narrow laboratory worker, must appear positively sinful. One misses, however, the focal illustrative detail around which the differences between the various psychological schools could have been more graphically developed.

Perhaps the most serious deficiency of the book is the failure, traditional among historians of psychology, to discuss the social orientation of psychological systems. Since the general attitudes of psychologists are conditioned by their social milieu, the choice of what is likely to be the most promising line of psychological analysis is probably influenced by factors additional to purely technical ones. The rationalist psychology of the eighteenth century was part of the whole movement of critical social rationalism which sought to find a "natural" human basis for social institutions. The evolutionary psychology of the nineteenth century was an offshoot of the great streams of evolutionary optimism in Germany and England which rationalized the prejudice of the rising bourgeoisie that the latest in time was the best in quality. In our own day we have observed how conservative social thought eternalizes the historical patterns of the age by reading them into schedules of innate and invariant impulses. Few psychologists are guilty of the grotesqueries of Morton Prince—who declared, "at first the infant is a thief; he stretches out his hand impelled by the instinct of greed, to seize and appropriate whatever he sees"—but it would not be hard to show that almost all of the dominant schools are subtly colored with unconscious social bias.

Yet analysis shows that there is really no logical, *i.e.*, strictly necessary, connection between psychological systems and the social presuppositions and context in which they are found. It may be true that there is a definite historical relationship between the vogue of behaviorism and the spread of mass production, for a psychology which teaches that there are no special aptitudes and that individual differences are built in from the outside is admirably adapted to the needs of a social system in which mass education turns out the robots necessary for mass production. Logically, however, behaviorism is compatible not only with the purposes of the big business executive who seeks psychological justification for treating man as a machine, but with the ideals of the social reformer who holds that new men and women can be developed by new social conditions. Conflicting psychological currents among the Russian dialectical materialists furnish an illustration of the converse of the above proposition: a common social point of view, although it may exclude some systems of psychology, does not necessarily determine *one* system of psychology.

SIDNEY HOOK.

Books in Brief

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

IN DEFENSE OF THE SENATE, by Royden J. Dangerfield. *Norman: University of Oklahoma Press. 365 pages. $4.*

Dr. Dangerfield has prepared a monograph that should be consulted as a corrective to their anger by all those who have in the past denounced the Senate for its delaying, muddling and generally embarrassing the negotiation of treaties. Applying the statistical technique which seems to have come to dominate all the departments of the University of Chicago, where his work was done, Dr. Dangerfield has been able to clear up many difficult points and let the Senate off with no more than a very qualified rebuke.

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He begins by a historical account of the treaty-making machinery of the United States, concluding that "The treaty clause [of the Constitution] itself neither defines, limits, nor delineates a procedure, and to the precedents evolving from the necessities of expediency must one ascribe the present treaty-making procedure." Dr. Dangerfield discovers on studying the time delays to which treaties have been subjected that, "One-half of the treaties were approved in twenty-eight days or less; and 498 treaties, or 80 percent of the total, were approved in less than a hundred days. . . . Only forty treaties, 6 percent, required more than one year to secure the action of the Senate." The most delayed of all treaties, that dealing with the Isle of Pines, was delayed 7,681 days, chiefly because it menaced property interests of Americans established on the Isle, before its status was even tentatively defined. Obviously Dr. Dangerfield cannot go very deeply into any one treaty fight, nor does he write very penetratingly of the more fundamental causes lying behind the attitudes expressed in the Senate: the statistical method precludes that kind of contribution. His prescription for improvement is an addition to governmental machinery: the formation of a Foreign Relations Cabinet made up of the Secretary of State, the Under-Secretary, a senior Drafting Officer, the Chairman and the ranking minority members of the Senate and House committees on foreign affairs. These men meeting together could, he thinks, eliminate most of the present difficulties.

Art

ART, LIFE AND NATURE IN JAPAN, by Masaharu Anesaki. *Boston: Marshall Jones Company. 178 pages. $3.50.*

In this interesting study of Japanese psychology as it is reflected in Japanese literature and art, Mr. Anesaki outlines the development of the modern Japanese mind by giving the political, social and religious history of the country. His style is light, simple, delicate, thoroughly Japanese. There are some keen generalizations on and comparisons with the West in the volume, and photographs of the better known Japanese paintings, temples and statues. The book, excellently printed and bound, has been prepared from lectures originally delivered in America.

Philosophy

INVITATION TO PHILOSOPHY, by Durant Drake. *Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 563 pages. $3.25.*

Durant Drake, the author of "Problems of Religion" and a contributor to "Essays in Critical Realism," has prepared a general introduction to philosophy, taking up the major problems of philosophy, the major contributions of science to philosophical discussion, and what is briefly termed "Human Destiny." These are discussed in language as simple as possible for each subject. The range and common sense of the volume make it a useful summary both for college classrooms and for the lay reader.

THE MARCH OF PHILOSOPHY, by Henry Alpern. *New York: The Dial Press. 400 pages. $3.50.*

Somewhat in the manner of Will Durant, but less fluently and dramatically, Mr. Alpern explains the doctrines of the world's most famous philosophers and discusses separately materialism, idealism, pragmatism, intuitionism and neo-realism. Although claiming to present "an impersonal view of the cardinal tenets of the history of philosophy, leaving it to the reader to judge for himself whether the conclusions reached are appealing or otherwise," Mr. Alpern is a confirmed idealist and evaluates other doctrines from his own point of view.

Travel

A MODERN PILGRIMAGE, by Mary Berenson. *New York: D. Appleton-Century Company. 368 pages. $3.*

Mary Berenson traveled with her husband, Bernard Berenson, through Syria and Palestine in 1928. Their party was thoroughly documented and competently guided. They looked at a great number of the mosques, castles, temples, aqueducts and antique public buildings with which kings and generals of almost all religions have richly larded the littoral between Antioch and Jaffa. They also

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noted the qualities of the landscape, which varies between the verdant plains of Esdraelson and the "semi-desert which is the highest expression of Bedouin culture." Mrs. Berenson also had occasional adventures with native life. "A Modern Pilgrimage" is a place-by-place chronicle of what Mrs. Berenson saw. She is strongly inclined to praise what is old and deplore what is new. She praises the Blue Mosque most of all, most deplores Arab negligence and filth, and is thoroughly irritated by the sight of the "fantastic" Zionists.

Fiction

PETER ABELARD, by Helen Waddell. *New York: Henry Holt and Company. $2.50.*

Thanks to Heloise's love letters, Peter Abelard is more renowned nowadays as a lover than he is for his significant contributions to the development of rational thinking. This novel achieves a neat reconciliation of these two aspects in Abelard's life without sacrificing the important historical facts. Miss Waddell puts the emphasis of her narrative on the romance but never allows her reader to forget that Abelard is an intellectual giant giving vent to emotions he had suppressed for almost forty years. While she writes in a beautiful prose style that conveys the medieval atmosphere of the setting, she is usually at a respectful distance from the lovers, leaving it to her minor characters to comment on the highlights of the romance.

PORTRAIT OF A WOMAN, by John Hyde Preston. *New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. $2.50.*

The sun also rises in Connecticut. An abundance of dialogue fringed with off-color words, characters who punctuate their bright and dull remarks with alcoholic stimulants—these suggest Mr. Preston's model and pattern. He writes of summer residents of Eastport instead of dissolute Americans living in Paris, but their views on life and their capacities for drinking are much the same. The woman of his portrait is a beautiful neurotic whose main concern in life is finding a satisfactory male. He comes along, has an affair with her, but though deeply in love, refuses to marry her because he is afraid she will be as promiscuous in married life as she was before they met.

Contributors

CHARLES B. KEFAUVER, who has sold public-utility holding-company securities in Nova Scotia, in Massachusetts, Texas and many other states, now lives in Boston.

JONATHAN MITCHELL is at present on his way to Montevideo, Uruguay, where he will observe the Pan-American Conference which opens early in December.

HENRY STEELE COMMAGER is a professor of History at New York University and, in collaboration with S. E. Morison, is the author of "The Growth of the American Republic."

LOUIS KRONENBERGER has contributed critical articles and reviews to many literary publications. He was formerly on the editorial staff of the publishing firm of Liveright, Inc., and editor of the magazine, Modern Youth. He is now with Alfred A. Knopf.

HUTCHINS HAPGOOD, a Harvard graduate of the class of 1892, lived in Greenwich Village during much of the period covered in Floyd Dell's autobiography. He is the author of "The Autobiography of a Thief," "An Anarchist Woman," "The Spirit of Labor" and other works.

HORACE TAYLOR is a member of the Department of Economics at Columbia University.

SIDNEY HOOK, an assistant professor of Philosophy at New York University and a lecturer at the New School for Social Research, recently published "Towards the Understanding of Karl Marx" under the imprint of the John Day Company. He is now at work on a new book to be called "From Hegel to Marx."

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